

*Rimu.*

There was no new discovery in this vicinity during last year. It was thought that the lead which was lost in Griffin and party's claim would be again picked up further on; but so far as prospecting operations have been carried on nothing of a payable character has been found. Most of the claims that got gold at the first of the rush are still being worked with success. Many of them are now worked by adit-levels, brought in from the edge of the terrace facing the Hokitika River, instead of from shafts. The ground is not rich, but it gives fair remuneration for working. Prospecting shafts were sunk under the auspices of the Miners' Association, ahead of Griffin's Claim, and a little gold was found in some of the strata passed through. One shaft was sunk near the head of Frosty Creek, about a mile and a half further south than where Stephens and party are getting fair returns from the ground. This shaft is sunk to a depth of 192ft. 6in. At the depth of 132ft. 6in. a stratum 18in. thick was passed through containing colours of gold, and at 171ft. another stratum was gone through which contained from five to six strong colours of gold to the tin-dishful of wash-drift; also, at the bottom of the shaft, a small prospect of gold was got in the drift in the last 2ft. 6in.

No water was met with in this shaft, neither was there any sign of it being near the bottom. The strata passed through down to the depth of about 133ft. was dipping south and west, at the rate of about 3in. to 5ft., or 1 in 20; but below this, the layers of material were deposited about level. The size of the shaft in the clear was 5ft. by 2ft. 7in. down to a depth of 100ft., and below this 4ft. 10in. by 2ft. 5in., being slabbed the whole way down. The miners sinking this shaft stated that they would have liked to have sunk deeper, but as they never expected to go to such a depth, the shaft was too small to continue sinking, as a horse-whim would have to be erected for winding. Annexed is a diagram showing the different strata passed through. The same men who sunk this prospecting shaft were at the time of my visit prospecting at the northern end of the lead, and getting a little gold near Arch Creek.

The President of the Miners' Association at Rimu, under whose auspices prospecting operations were carried on in the locality, in his annual report states that they had sunk thirteen shafts making an aggregate depth of 859ft., the deepest one being 190ft., and the shallowest one 29ft., the cost of sinking being £173 18s., or an average of 4s. 3d. per foot. In addition to this, they constructed 208ft. of prospecting drives, at a cost of £32 7s. 9d., being an average of about 2s. 5d. per foot. It is to be regretted that this association was not successful in finding gold, for their perseverance and the economical manner in which the prospecting operations were carried on deserves the highest praise.

The whole of the country between the Hokitika and Totara Rivers, following the road-line from Rimu to Ross, is covered to a great depth with alluvial drifts deposited in places by glacial action, and afterwards sluiced away by flowing streams. In some places large boulders are found quite angular and with sharp edges, showing that they could not have been rolled about with the action of water; while in other places the boulders are rounded and water-worn. The manner in which the different strata are lying at the southern end of the Back Creek lead, Rimu, would show that the stream had, at least in places, flowed in a south-westerly direction—that is, taking the dip the stratum is found lying at on the upper levels. The evidence, however, is tolerably conclusive that the gold found on this field has originally been brought down from the mountains and deposited in morainic matter by glacial action, and the concentration of the heaviest particles by flowing water has left the gold in layers or bands as now found. A very large area of gravel-drifts in this locality would pay for working, if a good supply of water could be obtained at a sufficient elevation to wash away the ground by hydraulic sluicing.

The bottom on which the more recent gravel-drifts is lying, at the face of the terrace fronting the Hokitika River, is what is termed Brighton bottom, and consists of similar material to that known as old-man reef at Ross, belonging to a much earlier period than the drifts which are now being worked for gold, and also must have been brought from a different direction from that in which the more recent deposits came. This bottom is composed of highly-rounded soft pebbles, and small boulders in some places, showing that it has also been subjected to a stream of water. In some places colours of gold are found, and there is no reason why a stratum carrying payable auriferous drift should not be found in this material, more especially where it joins with the slate or schist rocks; but, as the whole of the coast in this locality seems to have gradually sunk, there may be a great depth of this Brighton bottom to go through in places before the bed-rock is reached. The mere fact of gold not being obtained in places where this deposit is found lying on the bed-rock is no criterion that no gold will be found in certain channels passing through it, the same as now found in more recent deposits lying on the bed-rock.

*Craig's Freehold.*

This is situated on the south side of the Hokitika River, nearer the ocean-beach than any of the alluvial drifts worked in the vicinity of Woodstock or Rimu. Mr. Craig has thrown his land open for mining, and a sea-beach lead of gold has been found passing through it, which has been giving rich returns for working. Mr. Craig has let a portion of his land on tribute to a party of men, who pay him, it is stated by the Warden, 33½ per cent. of the gross proceeds; and he has now got about £2,000 of the proceeds for the short time the tributers have been at work. This land a very few years ago could have been purchased cheaply, and it would never have been valuable, at least for many years to come, had not gold been discovered on it.

*Ross.*

There are still a good many miners working about the vicinity of Ross, Donnelly's Creek, and Donoghue's; but, with the exception of a few claims, the ground is getting very poor, requiring a large quantity of wash-drift to be operated on to get sufficient gold to pay working expenses.