

The Lammerlaw Antimony Company, which has been at a very large outlay in developing its antimony-mine, has been compelled to cease operations.

The number of miners engaged at Waipori is estimated at 120 Europeans and sixty Chinese.

WAITAHUNA.

There are about sixty European and about twenty-five Chinese miners working in this part of the district. The total European population is given as 1,150, and Chinese thirty. All the workings are alluvial. The principal claims are those of Thompson and party, Ferris and party, Callanan and party, Quigley and party, and O'Kane and party. These claims employ, in the aggregate, about forty men. There are also two or three claims worked by Chinese. All the claims are doing fairly well. Thompson and party, who command a good supply of water, hold in the main gully a licensed holding of 26 acres, which they work now by means of an elevator plant, entailing the labour of ten men, and are enabled to work with profitable results ground that formerly was considered unpayable.

The other claims spoken of are paying fairly, but, as stated in my former report, no exceptionally rich returns are received, nor expected. There are now no quartz workings in this locality. The reefs formerly worked—or, rather, prospected—were abandoned owing to their non-paying character. One person is still prospecting the old claim of the Waitahuna Quartz-mining Company, but with no successful result so far as is known.

Mr. J. R. Perry, the introducer of the elevator system of mining to Gabriel's Gully, has, during the year, obtained a grant of a prospecting area, such area forming a portion of the bed of the Waitahuna River. He has, at considerable expense, put a dredge upon the claim. He is not yet in full work, employing but a few men, as it is understood he is altering the mode of working the dredge.

At Manuka Creek, Glenore, and Adam's Flat there are about thirty-five miners at work, of whom fifteen are Chinese. There is nothing special to relate as to them, as most of them do not devote the whole of their time to mining, but are engaged in agriculture and other labouring pursuits during a portion of the year.

Messrs. Nelson and party, after having prospected the old bed of the river at Glenore, obtained a prospecting claim of 8 acres. They have built a dredge upon the claim, and are busily at work. They employ about nine men. Up to the present their returns are said to be as satisfactory as they expected.

WAIKAIA.

At Waikaia about seventy Europeans and eighty Chinese are engaged in mining. There are about sixty alluvial claims being worked, and of these only two employ more than two men. There is no noticeable improvement in mining prospects here, although the amount of gold obtained is still, considering the population, far from insignificant. It is said that the bank bought during the year gold to the value of £6,758.

None of the special claims taken up a few years ago are being worked. Two special claims were recently granted—to Sew Hoy and Kun Yok. In connection with these claims, work is being actively prosecuted, as about forty men are engaged making a water-race at Nokomai, which, when completed, will be used for the purpose of working claims.

With respect to Nokomai, where formerly a considerable number of men were employed, with the exception of the forty men spoken of above there are only four men now at work at mining. There are no quartz workings in this part of the district.

TAPANUI.

At Tapanui there are about twenty European and twenty Chinese miners employed, but there is nothing to record concerning them. A rabbit-tinning factory in the vicinity affords means of employment to between twenty and thirty men.

Very little mining is now going on at Waikaka. There is considerable difficulty in getting timber, and the gold is in deep workings, which require more capital than the miners in that district possess. The old miners, however, assert that there is payable gold to be got in considerable quantities. A great deal of gold was at one time obtained by Chinamen and others on land which Logan obtained from the Government. This estate has been recently cut up and sold. It is excellent agricultural and pastoral land, and found, as good land always will, ready sale at reasonable prices. There are still, however, several sections of Government land which are stated to be payably auriferous. The farmers and settlers, however, in the district are constantly applying to the Crown Lands Commissioner in Invercargill for leases of one and another of these sections, and for conversion of the leasehold into freehold. The provisions reserving mining rights soon become worthless in these cases. The leaseholders fence in these sections, and then if a miner attempts to prospect or mine he is soon worried or harassed off the land; and in one instance it was stated to me that a Chinaman who began work, and had carried his box down to the creek to wash, had it all pitched into the creek. Naturally, the settler, once having fenced the land in, comes to regard it as his own, and resents all intrusion.

The settlers at Waikaka indulge in the hope that owing to the cutting up of Logan's land, and large increase in settlement, the railway formerly contemplated will be carried there.

A considerable field of employment exists in this and other districts if there could be such an organization of labour and capital as would enable the work to be carried on profitably at a lower depth. I have been much struck, in more than one instance, at Waikaia and elsewhere, at the steady and profitable mining done by the single miner and his mate at a small outlay. It is, as in most cases, the steady, sober man with good experience and practical knowledge and skill who thus succeeds—making a good wage, equal to £4 10s. a week.