

sluicing the top stuff off; and the directors in the meantime are considering a plan which is calculated to relieve the dredge of its tailings. 814oz. were got during the year, out of which the fortunate shareholders received £1,175.

Beneath is a statement showing, approximately, the number of men actually employed dredging, the quantity of coal consumed if working continuously, and the amount of gold actually obtained, during the year ended 31st March last, by the ten dredges which were working on the 1st April, 1893:—

Men employed actually dredging.	Quantity of Coal consumed during the Year if working continuously.	Amount of Gold actually got.
65	6,050 tons	5,208oz.

In addition to the number of men employed actually dredging, ten teams of from three to eight horses are engaged carting coal from Coal Creek to the respective dredges, ranging from two miles to the nearest to nineteen miles to the furthest away, at an average cost (including pit charges) of 17s. 6d. per ton to the consumer.

Mining in this portion of my district still presents a prosperous appearance, and more particularly does this apply to dredging. During the year six licensed holdings, embracing 85 acres, were applied for, while three, including 43 acres, were granted and issued. During the same period eight special claims, aggregating 409 acres, were applied for, and six, including 306 acres, were granted; 100 ordinary applications were dealt with; and thirteen complaints were heard and determined. The total goldfields revenue collected, £742, exceeds that of the preceding year by over £100. It is very difficult to get at even an approximate estimate of the quantity of gold obtained during the year, but I have ascertained that the quantity exceeds 11,000oz.

The increased rainfall has materially benefited the agricultural and pastoral interests, the crops having been very much above the average, while the native and artificial grasses are more luxuriant than for many years past.

WAKATIPU.

This portion of my district is in exactly the same position as last year, and therefore there is little of general interest to report on. The revenue received at Queenstown and Arrowtown collectively is about the same as during the previous twelve months—Queenstown contributing a little more and Arrowtown a little less. Although there has been no excitement caused by any exceptional find of gold, either in alluvial or quartz-mining, there has been a steady yield of gold, which brings the returns to about the same value as for several years past.

Quartz.—The five companies that are now in existence are all prospecting, none of them being able to be classed as dividend-paying. The Rees Valley Quartz Company, Limited (old Invincible) is still searching for the reef. The Tipperary Gold-mine, Limited (Macetown) is opening out in several directions, and also putting in a low-level adit, which, with all possible despatch, cannot strike the reef for eighteen months at the earliest. The Premier Consolidated Gold Company (Limited), which is worked by the same management as the Tipperary Gold-mine, has proved itself a good payable mine, and would have proved a dividend-paying concern had it not been so heavily handicapped with management and other expenses, which appear to be so indispensable to all gold-mining company speculations. The Gallant Tipperary Quartz-mine has, during the past year, been opened out, and payable stone is now being got. The Achilles Goldfields (Limited), formerly the Phoenix, has done little or nothing during the past year to swell the yield of gold, but the mine has been well prospected, and with very gratifying results, as the mine never looked better than at present.

Alluvial.—There are no new finds to report, but the number of miners occupied in alluvial mining keeps about the same as heretofore. Occasionally a small find is made, which proves an incentive to further prospecting and to further finds. Phenomenal finds and rushes are now things of the past, and it is not to be expected that anything of the kind will occur in this district.

Dredging.—Two companies only are now left—namely, the Sew Hoy Big Beach and the Sand-hills Gold-mining Company; both are able to declare dividends, the former at regular intervals. The Sew Hoy Company is working a portion of its ground in the mouth of the Shotover Gorge on the hydraulic system, and is obtaining highly payable results. Unfortunately, the water-supply at present available is insufficient for its requirements, and to bring in a further supply means an outlay of many thousand pounds. Even this may possibly be attempted and accomplished before the next report on this mining district is penned.

CROMWELL.

Although the past season has been a fairly moist one, yet mining in this district has not been an unqualified success. This has been owing in some measure to the water strike at Bannockburn, which lasted for eleven weeks, during which time mining in that locality was simply at a standstill. The ground in the neighbourhood has been worked for many years, and the miners averred that it can no longer be profitably worked with water at 5s. per head, and asked that it be reduced to 4s. per head. This the race-owners would not agree to, but offered to reduce it to 4s. 6d. As this was not deemed enough concession by the miners, they went out on strike, and remained out for eleven weeks, but finally accepted the terms of the race-owners, and resumed work. The natural result of this is that, although water was more plentiful than for many years back, yet the yield of gold will be very far short of that of former seasons.

Another depressing cause was this: that expectations regarding the fall of the river last winter were, unfortunately, not realised; and although the number of Chinese in the district remains pretty much what it was last year, yet they, in particular, have had a poor season.

The dredge did fairly well in the prospecting area, but not sufficiently so to warrant settling down finally, and I notice it has again ascended to its old ground, near the Lowburn Punt.