

likely to do so for a long time. From another claim, known as No. 1, about 100ft. square, four Chinamen took about £3,000 each. After leaving it others went in, and for two or three years made from £3 to £4 per week per man. Some of the claims on Round Hill paid the holders as much as £20 a week per man, and in some cases, where claims were worked on a false bottom, other parties took up the ground again and worked down to the main bottom with very good results.

From what is known of the ground in the valley of the Ourawera, there is little doubt but there is a large area here that will prove remunerative for working on the hydraulic-elevating principle, but the scarcity of water will limit this method of working to a few claims. It is said that a fair supply can be obtained from the Pourapourakino Stream, but it will yet take some time before this supply can be brought in, and if the Round Hill Company succeed in finding capital to extend its head-race to that creek, the whole of the water will be required by that company to work the ground systematically and economically. The Round Hill is therefore a field that will support a limited mining population for many years, but it can never be a field where a large number of men can make a competent livelihood, as very little of the ground will pay ordinary wages to work from shafts or tunnels. What is wanted is a large supply of water, and that cannot be obtained unless at such a cost that private individuals could not undertake it, and the prospects of being recouped for the outlay is not sufficient to justify a costly water-supply to be taken in hand.

Orepuki.

There seems to be no diminution in the number of miners on the field from that on my last visit. The most of those engaged in mining have made themselves comfortable homes, having gardens around them, and some have got fair-sized paddocks, which allows them to keep a few head of cattle. At one time there was a considerable area of a mining reserve here which was used as a commonage, and as the land is a rich alluvial deposit it grows excellent grass and pastures a large quantity of stock. The most of this reserve is now taken up in occupation licenses. Some of the miners objected strongly to this, and held such strong views on the subject of maintaining the commonage that they stood aloof from making application for any portion of it as an occupation license, and are now regretting that they did not make application the same as their neighbours. On most of the goldfields the land is of very little value except for the gold it contains, but at Orepuki the great depth of rich alluvial soil all over the field makes one feel sorry that such land should be washed away in extracting the gold. The miners, however, on this field all appear well-to-do. The neat painted cottages and villas they have erected for themselves show that they are making a good livelihood. There is still a large amount of auriferous ground to work, but the quantity of water that can be brought on to the field at anything like a moderate expense is very limited, and very often, especially in fine weather, the supply is not sufficient to allow them to work in their claims. This, however, is compensated by having a few acres fenced in for cattle, and, all having good gardens, they can grow their own vegetables; this, together with having a milch cow, allows them to keep their families at a minimum cost, as they can find employment in cultivating the soil when they have not work in their claims.

The most of the mines on this field have water-races of their own, or, at least, interests in water-races—that is, two or three parties may hold a water-race conjointly, and, by having dams to conserve the water at night, they manage by this means to command a medium supply for a few hours per day, but none of the parties have a large supply. There is a great depth of ground in which there is very little gold, if any, that has to be run away before the regular auriferous wash-drift on the bottom is reached, which in some places is from 4ft. to 6ft. in depth, but the depth of the auriferous layer varies considerably in the different claims. Sometimes it will not be much more than 1ft. thick. The deepest ground is about 70ft.: this is in Weston and party's claim. In the claims of Turnbull and party, Roulston and party, Barry and Donovan, and King and Instone, the ground is from 40ft. to 50ft. in depth. All these men seem satisfied with the returns, although they complain that the ground is poor; but had they a large supply of water, to run away the top stuff in a wholesale manner, there is no doubt but the whole of the claims would yield handsome returns.

The bottom the miners are working on is a sandstone grit, in places full of fossil marine shells, showing that the whole of this field has been under the sea at one time, and the auriferous wash-drift and the character of the gold also bears this out. Very rich deposits of gold were got on the sea-beach and in the low terraces in the early days with very little labour, but the shallow ground being worked out, men have now to go further back and remove a great deal of dead material before they can get at the auriferous layer of wash-drift.

It is worthy of note that Mr. Hennessy is said to have been working his claim ever since he gained his law-case with Weston and party about his water-right, although the miners in the district at the time of my last visit assured me that the ground would not pay to work. On making inquiries of one of Weston's party as to how the sluicing into the creek affected their head-race, he said that they did not suffer a great deal of inconvenience. One of their party had to do about half a day's work each week at the head of their race to clean it out. There never can be a large number of miners employed on this field owing to the scarcity of water, but those who have claims will have many years' work.

The school is now removed from the reserve on which it was first erected to a site nearer the township, and Barry and Donovan are working the lead which runs through this reserve. From what could be gathered from the man working in this claim at the time of my visit, the lead is very narrow, and this is borne out by the narrow gut they are taking up, the bottom of which does not average above 30ft. in width. King and Instone are working a gut on the opposite side of the school reserve to where Barry and Donovan are at work, but they are outside the reserve. There is yet a large area of auriferous ground in the vicinity of Orepuki, but it is very little use for any newcomers to try to make a livelihood here unless they purchase some of the water-rights, for all the available water that can be brought on to the ground at a moderate outlay has been long ago secured.