

COAL-MINING.

Brunnerton.—During the year under review the Grey Valley Coal Company surrendered the lease held by them for the Brunner Mine, and were granted a fresh one, thereby securing a concession in the matter of royalty, which is now fixed at 6d. per ton for the whole term of the lease—that is, for fifty-six years from the 1st January, 1895. For the year ended the 31st December this company exported 119,835 tons of coal, 1,349 tons of coke, and 1,046 tons of fire-clay goods, making a total of 122,231 tons.

Owing to the dulness in the coal trade, the prospects of this portion of the district are of a very gloomy nature. Numbers of those hitherto engaged in coal-mining have been compelled, through want of work, to go prospecting for gold, and there is every probability, I am informed, of still further reductions being made in the number of men employed in the mine.

Blackball.—During the year ended December, 1894, 24,400 tons of coal were exported from this mine. The weekly output is about 800 tons.

Coal Creek.—Two miles and three-quarters of formation and bridges, being the centre portion of the Grey-Point Elizabeth Railway-line, have been completed, and plans are now being prepared for a bridge over the Grey River. Mr. Bishop has been appointed mine-manager of the company's coal-mine, and is engaged in prospecting on the lease preparatory to opening up the mine. As soon as the prospecting operations have determined the best place to open up the mine, the remaining portion of the railway-line at the top end will be put in hand. Mr. Gillies, the engineer of this line, has employed, on an average, forty men a month during the year in forming the railway.

Timber.—This is an industry that has assumed some proportions. During the year ending December, 1894, 6,766,865ft. of white-, red-, and silver-pine have been exported. Of this quantity, 686,621ft. were exported during the last six months of the year to Australia. During the quarter ended 31st of March last, 1,661,334ft. were exported. A trial shipment is now in process of being shipped, per New Zealand Shipping Company's barque "Rangitikei," to the London market.

Return of cases disposed of in the Magistrate's and Warden's Courts at Greymouth for the year ending the 31st of March, 1895: Civil, 337; criminal, 213; Warden's, 58.

The revenue for the year, amounting to £1,428 0s. 4d., made up as follows: Warden's department, £1,130 8s. 4d; Magistrate's, £297 12s.: total, £1,428 0s. 4d.

Particulars of revenue collected in the Warden's Court, at Greymouth, for the year ending the 31st March, 1895:—

	£	s.	d.
Miners' rights	313	11	0
Business licenses	1	10	0
Water-races	23	10	0
Registrations	25	2	0
Rents	602	10	0
Fees and fines	11	0	0
Miscellaneous	153	5	4
	1,130	8	4

Number of applications lodged during the above-named period, 252.

AHAURA.

No Town and Red Jack's Creek.—There are a considerable number of miners scattered about this district, mostly fossicking along and about old workings. Some few months ago a small rush took place at Cronin's Terrace, Sunday Creek, caused by Cronin and party and Nolan and party striking good payable ground. The difficulty in testing the ground is the length of tunnels. Cronin and party obtained gold after driving 600ft., Nolan and party had to drive 1,200ft., and McCarthy and party 1,600ft., before striking the line of gold.

Nelson Creek.—This place always finds employment for a large number of miners, who generally work at sluicing with fairly good results. The Nelson Creek Gold-mining Company have got their new plant in working-order, and will find employment for a good number of men when once the ground is fully opened, which, in the opinion of many, is an excellent mining property.

Ahaura and Orwell Creek.—In last report mention was made of a new find at Cariboo Creek. Erickson and party, after driving their tunnel 1,300ft., found that they were at too high a level; consequently will have to be driven over again before the value of Nicholas and party's find along the terrace higher up the creek can be gauged. This is now being done. The find along the north bank of Ahaura River is receiving some attention from the miners about the locality. The difficulty in obtaining water for sluicing is the drawback. Two claims are on good payable gold, the gold being coarse and heavy, showing a long continuance if it can be followed. Opinions differ as to which direction it has come from—whether a connection with Orwell Creek or from a place some miles up the Ahaura River, where a similar kind of gold was obtained some twenty-eight years ago. In either case it is an important find, and will be heard of again. No permanent supply of water could be obtained for the locality other than by the construction of a water-race from either of the "Big Gullies," or both, on the Ahaura River, a distance of about nine miles.

Blackball continues to find employment for a number of miners. Sluicing mostly is the kind of mining carried on. At the Upper Blackball there are some good payable claims, which will last for many years to come.

Moonlight.—About the usual number of miners continue at this place. At Stewart's Hill there are three claims paying from £3 to £8 per week for each man. There are also three tunnels being driven for the same run of gold. The parties constructing them are in daily expectation of getting into the gutter, which is confined in solid slate. Very recently a nice nugget, weighing 36oz., was unearthed in the left-hand branch.