

pany's—has actually been at work, the returns from which have not been published, it is anticipated that the dredging industry will, in the near future, be largely in evidence throughout the auriferous river- and creek-beds in this district.

NELSON.

Takaka District.

Only a few men have been employed in this district during the past year. At the Bubu and Anatoki districts several parties are at work, with varying success, the scarcity of water being a drawback.

Collingwood District.

Rocky River Sluicing Company (Area, 100 acres).—Arrangements are being made for the effective working of this company's property. Water for sluicing is now obtained from Mackenzie Creek, but a race is being constructed from Rocky River. There is a large area of gold-bearing cement underlaid by limestone on the property.

Johnston's United Mine has been under protection, and in February last the prevailing bush-fires destroyed the battery and plant.

Parapara Hydraulic Sluicing Company.—Hydraulic-sluicing and elevating works have been carried on with varied success. The yield of gold up to December last was 198 oz., and no doubt this would have been largely augmented had they not been hampered for want of water during the greater part of the summer. The returns up to the end of February were 87 oz. of gold, showing a decided improvement compared with a similar period during last year. Mr. Peters, the former manager of the Roxburgh Amalgamated Claim, in Otago, took over the management in the beginning of 1898, and since that time matters have assumed a better aspect. Both the elevating and sluicing plants are in improved working-order, and there is every evidence of a continuance of satisfactory yields. The want of a sufficient water-supply throughout the year is a material drawback to this company. The present manager estimates that large areas of auriferous drift exist on the properties which will prove payable, but in order to secure interest on the capital employed greater quantities must be dealt with, and in order to effect this the present water-supply must be increased by improved water-races and by the conservation of the winter's rainfall. The manager has instructions to move the elevating plant from its present position to a block of land known as the "Maori Reserve," nearer the Parapara River, and having an easy way of getting rid of the tailings. The only reason for making this change is a difficulty in the manner of discharging the tailings from the elevator where it is now placed.

Collingwood Goldfields Company.—The following comprehensive report is taken from the *Golden Bay Argus* :—

"This company, whose headquarters are in London, holds, as we have before indicated, over 300 acres of the rich alluvial areas at the Quartz Ranges, about twenty miles from Collingwood. When some two years ago the possibilities of this locality as a legitimate mining speculation were first brought under the notice of foreign capitalists the cost and difficulties of providing the necessary water-supply for its proper development was considered a serious obstacle to the ultimate success of the scheme, and the company commenced its operations by making expensive and elaborate surveys with a view to ascertaining with some degree of scientific correctness the probable cost of connecting the alluvial deposits with an adequate supply of water, the cost being variously estimated at from £20,000 to £50,000. The result of these surveys, which were carried out under the supervision of Mr. Holdsworth, C.E., by whom a survey-line was traversed from the ranges to the Boulder Lake, over four miles distant, and levels taken, proved the feasibility of bringing a large water-supply from Boulder Lake and the Boulder River, but the expense was still considered somewhat formidable. It was then estimated that a large proportion of this race would require fluming, the quantity of timber necessary for which was put down at no less than 750,000 ft., while, owing to the rough and broken nature of the line traversed by the race (which is all through heavy bush country), the cost of cutting the race, bridging of creeks and gorges, was thought to be almost prohibitive. It was intended that the timber should be obtained from the local sawmills, and transported some miles to the race, at considerable cost, not the least of which would be the necessity for bridging the Aorere River at Salisbury's crossing. Thus it was that the development of these rich alluvial areas was considered almost beyond the region of reasonable practicability. The next step in the company's operations was the engagement as manager of Mr. F. G. Mace, a gentleman of extensive experience, both in this colony and Tasmania, in this particular class of hydraulic sluicing, and who has recently obtained his certificate as a member of the New Zealand Institute of Mining Engineers. After a careful and minute inspection of the locality, the peculiar natural advantages of the surroundings seemed to suggest to Mr. Mace an easier and less expensive method of obtaining the much needed water-supply, and accordingly an alternative scheme for the attainment of this object was laid before his superiors. In the upper reaches of the Aorere Valley the immense tracts of valuable virgin timber lands attracted the attention of the new manager, and a hasty survey of the neighbourhood confirmed the feasibility of the alternative scheme, by which this timber could be utilised for the construction of the water-race in such a manner that the obstacles which had before presented themselves could be reduced to an almost vanishing point. Acting upon these suggestions, the superior management secured large timber rights in the valley, purchased a complete sawmilling plant of their own, and entered heartily upon the carrying-out of the projected scheme, with the result that at the present moment quite an extensive industry has been established in connection with the company's operations. The sawmilling plant, which consisted of all the requisite adjuncts, was deposited at the Seventeen-mile Creek some months ago, and has been running with wonderful regularity and smoothness ever since, and is turning out timber at the rate of about 5,000 ft. per day, some 300,000 ft. now being stacked in the vicinity of the mill ready for transport to the race. Adjacent to the mill a suitable