

Work on the Corrie's Reward, which adjoins the Cræsus on the southern boundary, has consisted in driving cross-cuts and surface-prospecting by trenches. An adit is now being driven on contract to intersect a gold-bearing reef, 2 ft. in width, which outcrops near the boundary of the Corrie's Reward and Cræsus Company's ground. This is expected to reach the lode in the course of another 100 ft. of driving.

Several other leases on the Paparoa are being prospected by cross-cuts and surface-trenches, and altogether a considerable amount of work is being done, which will be lightened now that the road to the top of the range has been constructed. Hitherto the difficulty of conveying stores and tools has served to retard progress.

The Grey River Sluicing Company have extended their water-race from Blackball Township to the north bank of the Grey River, at which they hold 30 acres of ground which has proved highly remunerative.

There is a large area of land, extending from Moonlight Creek to Blackball, which only requires water to be brought on to allow of extensive sluicing operations being carried on. The Garden Gully Gold-mining Company have let a contract for driving 300 ft. of tunnel in connection with their special claim. The Christchurch Wilson Gold-mining Company are prospecting the Just-in-Time Special Claim, adjoining the Garden Gully, and have met with encouraging prospects. The Lord Harris Gold-mining Company are also prospecting their special claim adjoining, south of the Garden Gully, and have also met with encouraging prospects.

Moonlight Creek.—About the same number of men are still employed here as there have been in past times. There has been a new discovery made at McCarthy's Creek by McDowell and party, which may lead to a considerable area of land being taken up and worked. The party, which consists of four men, constructed a water-race on the ground, taking two years to construct it, and are highly satisfied with their property. At Healey's Gully they have been short of water during the past three months. There is no cure for this unless by the construction of a dam in the Roaring Meg Creek. There is considerable prospecting being done for reefs at the head of Moonlight Creek.

Orwell Creek.—This place continues about the same. The old Napoleon Gold-mining Company worked their ground down the flat until driven out by water. Graham and party (eight men) have taken up 20 acres in Taylor's Gully. The ground is deep (70 ft.), and the party have erected machinery for pumping and lifting purposes. This district suffers from the want of water. In the locality there are large areas of sluicing ground which cannot be worked.

Half-Ounce, Noble's and Duffer's Creek.—There has been no change in these districts during last year.

Ahaura.—Several new claims have been taken up along the north bank of Ahaura River, and in all cases when water is available satisfactory returns are made.

Nelson Creek.—A great amount of sluicing is carried on at Nelson Creek. This locality is situated advantageously in respect of water to a much greater extent than any other part of the Grey Valley. A Sydney syndicate have been carrying on prospecting operations by boring at German Gully No. 3, and have obtained results favourable to further work being done. No new ground opened.

No Town.—There has been no ground opened in the district during the last twelve months. Karrigan and party have made a find at Terrace at Fenian's Creek, which may develop into something extensive. The Chinese in considerable numbers still continue working at Red Jack's and Sunday Creeks.

Particulars of revenue collected in the Warden's Court, Ahaura, during the year ending the 31st March, 1899:—

	£	s.	d.
Miners' rights	275	10	0
Machine-site licenses	2	0	0
Water-races	14	0	0
Rents and royalties	1,702	9	5
Registrations	28	3	0
Warden's Court fees	22	17	0
Miscellaneous	96	9	3
	£2,141	8	8

I have, &c.,

H. A. STRATFORD, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 8.

Mr. Warden MACFARLANE, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Hokitika, June, 1899.

I have the honour to forward the mining statistical returns for the year ending the 31st March, 1899, together with my annual report on mining matters generally, in the district under my charge.

HOKITIKA.

The gold-workings in this district being all alluvial, the output of gold is largely contingent on the water-supply, derived from the rainfall in the immediate neighbourhood of the workings. For the four months ending the 31st January, 1899, the rainfall—as recorded at the Meteorological Station at Hokitika—was 55·65 in., or 13·91 in. per month. The return of gold for the same period was 4,631 oz., or 1,157 oz. per month. The rainfall for the three months ending the 30th