

In another part of Otago I found similar conditions existing some time ago, and drew the attention of the management to the need of better appliances for saving fine gold, suggesting longer sluice-boxes and the erection of side-tables. The suggestions were adopted, and the returns from the claim increased beyond expectations.

Golden Key Mine, Waipori.—The system of underground work adopted a year or two ago, with its attendant expenses of winding, pumping, &c., having been found too costly, I understand sluicing has been again adopted, and that a method of working by machinery is under consideration.

Notes on the claims at Post-office Creek (Verter Burn) will be found in the report of Mr. E. R. Green, Inspector of Mines.

Seventy-five men, including twenty Chinese, are returned as the number engaged in alluvial mining on the watershed of the Waipori River. This is independent of dredges, and the total number of persons employed in, and directly dependent on, mining of all kinds on the Waipori watershed is not less than two hundred. Besides this, storekeepers, farmers, saddlers, employes at engineering-works, as well as in many other businesses, are very largely benefited.

The prospective life of Waipori as a field for alluvial mining and dredging I estimate at ten to twelve years, but there are the possibilities of the Deep Lead being properly opened out, and much of the dredged ground being reworked with more efficient machinery. These would naturally add to the life of the district, apart from the future as a centre for quartz-mining.

Wetherstone's.

Golden Rise Claim.—This ground comprises an area of 100 acres. It is worked by hydraulic sluicing and elevating at its upper end, and by a small dredge at the lower end. Nearly one-fourth of the area has been worked by the present holders, whose operations represent the fourth time the ground has been turned over in working for gold, it having been previously worked three times over by hand-labour. The average depth is 9 ft. For hydraulicking purposes five heads of water are brought in from Bungtown and Blackman's Creeks and Malone's watershed. A dam costing £350 has been constructed for water-conservation, and a pressure due to a head of 200 ft. is attained in the paddock. Fourteen men are ordinarily employed, dredge-hands included. As this ground is shallow—and from the fact of its having been worked three times previously cannot be very rich—the holders reasonably claim that the area held should be large in proportion to the number of persons employed, and estimate its working-life at six or seven years.

Golden Crescent Claim, Wetherstone's.—An area of 90 acres, or thereabouts, is held. The ground is suitable for hydraulic sluicing only. It consists of rather rough hilly country, with a layer of drift overlying the cement-wash common to the district. It is proposed to work the upper ground off first, the working of the cement-wash coming in as a second operation. At my visit a race of about fifteen miles in length was approaching completion. This takes eight heads of water from Deep Creek, a tributary of the Waipori River. The company have also the use of an old race belonging to the Golden Rise Company, the latter company having the Crescent Company's surplus water as a *quid pro quo*. The cost of the new race, together with 6,300 ft. of 20 in. pipes (varying from 10 to 14 gauge), is given at £3,500. Sluicing operations were commenced in March with a limited supply of water, and the results obtained are said to be quite satisfactory. A good elevator has been erected. The entire outlay of the company, water-races included, is approximately £5,000.

Pomahaka.

Beyond a little fossicking little or no mining-work has been done during the year. Several claims have been applied for as dredging areas, and a dredge is being built by Messrs. Herbert and Todd. This is nearly completed, and is known as the "Scrubby Flat Dredge."

Beaumont and Island Block.

Champion Gold-mining Company (Limited), Beaumont (Secretary, Mr. R. Pilling, jun., Lawrence; claim-manager, Mr. J. Fahy).—This claim was formerly worked by the Beaumont Local Industry Co-operative Gold-mining Company, which went into liquidation. The purchasers of the property formed themselves into the present company, and are now working continuously, eleven men being employed. Some details of the claim appear in the reports for 1898 and 1899. The improved arrangements for gold-saving (referred to in last year's report) continue to give satisfaction. The gross thickness of material moved is variable. At my last visit the face was from 40 ft. to 50 ft. deep. Of this, 15 ft. to 20 ft. next the surface is a fine silty sand, which does not carry any gold. Below this is a coarse, pebbly gravel-wash, resting on a somewhat uneven bottom of schist rock. It is intended to work a part of the claim by dredging.

Messrs. Eadie and Kirkpatrick are sluicing at Horse-shoe Bend, and there are a few men making wages by digging along the river between Beaumont and Island Block.

The claim and plant at Island Block lately worked by the Island Block Extended Gold-mining Company have been sold to a Dunedin syndicate. I am informed that there is a probability of the ground being worked by electrically driven dredges somewhat on the lines sketched in my report of last year.

Miller's Flat.

The Golden Run Claim, alongside the Clutha River, is being worked by hydraulic sluicing and elevating. A large dredge is being built for the company.

Roxburgh and Teviot.

Roxburgh Amalgamated Mining and Sluicing Company (Limited), Roxburgh (Manager, Mr. J. H. Waigh).—This company's operations consist of sluicing and elevating on a fairly large scale. Total area of claim, 98 acres, of which somewhat less than one-third (approximately) has been