

DISTRICT OF WESTPORT COURT.

Addison's.

All the old claims in this locality continue to give payable returns, but, unfortunately, this cannot be said of those more recently taken up.

The General Exploration Company spent many thousand pounds in preparing to work their Bendigo Claim on an extensive scale, and ground-sluicing operations went on for a time. The returns were not made public, but it is generally understood that they were very disappointing. No work has been done on the claim for several months.

The Addison's Long Tunnel Gold-mining Company (Limited) have been working steadily during the year. The returns have been fairly profitable and sufficient to enable the company to pay off the balance of the purchase-money. The amount of gold won from the claim during the year was 364 oz. 18 dwt. 23 gr.

The Virgin Flat Gold-mining Company (Limited) has spent considerable sums of money in preparatory works, and expects to be getting gold shortly. During the last twelve months the following works have been completed by this company: The main head-race has been completed, with the exception of a few short lengths of fluming, for a length of 3 miles 10 chains, 189 chains of which is open ditch, and 61 chains of tunnel in blue reef. The tunnel follows the course of the river from the end of the open race, and enters the Totara River at the company's main intake. The main tail-race, which is a tunnel 5 ft. 8 in. by 3 ft. 6 in. in the clear, has been driven for a length of about 2,112 ft., leaving 858 ft. to be driven. This will be completed in about four months. This tunnel will be lined throughout with sawn timber cut on the ground, the company having erected a sawmilling plant driven by water brought in from their dam, a distance of 35 chains, by a race 2 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in. consisting of about 10 chains open race, 17 chains of tunnel, 3 chains of fluming, and 4 chains of siphon.

All timber required for the construction of tables, fluming, &c., will be cut at the company's mill.

Waimangaroa.

The Westport Twin Gold-mines held 200 acres at Waimangaroa as special claims and went to heavy expense for battery, water-races, tunnels, &c. After crushing for a few months the claim was abandoned, and the company went into liquidation. The property was then sold and another company proceeded to work the claim, but again the result was unsatisfactory, and the mine is now standing idle.

The Britannia Gold-mining Company (Limited) has had many disappointments, the stone taken from different parts of their mine always proving to be poorer than they anticipated, and outcrops of rich stone, when opened up, proving to be only of small extent. Work is now confined to the eastern portion of the mine, where a 3 ft. reef shows payable gold. This stone is now being driven on, and a few tons have been taken out.

Several small parties are working in the bed, and on the banks of the Waimangaroa River, and are making fair wages.

Karamea.

A large amount of dead work has been done at McKerrow and party's sluicing claim, which, in the first instance, was unfortunately opened up at an unsuitable place, in consequence of which the tables were smothered by heavy falls of *débris*, causing serious delays and compelling the party to open up at another point. This has been successfully done. Sluicing has been going on for four or five months, and payable gold is being got.

All the other large claims at Karamea have been abandoned. A few small parties, fossickers and haters, are scattered along the different creeks, and are probably just earning a living wage.

Mokihinui.

The quartz claims at Mokihinui have all been abandoned, and the few gold-miners still there are working small alluvial claims with varying results.

Fairdown.

The General Exploration Company holds two special claims at Fairdown, in connection with which they have expended several thousand pounds in preliminary works. Ground-sluicing was carried on for a few months with unprofitable results, and work then ceased.

Wellington Gold-mining Company (Limited).—This company was formed in August, 1899, for the purpose of buying Williams's freehold and taking 42 acres of Crown land, and so making a claim of 70 acres of sluicing-ground. A race has been constructed to carry twenty heads of water, its length being two miles and a half. Sluicing started on the 15th May. The wash is an average thickness of 30 ft. and not heavy. Character of gold, both coarse and fine. Formerly in this district—the "old diggings"—no effort seems to have been made to save the fine gold, which has simply been washed into the Buller; but this company is constructing tables specially to save fine gold. Sluicing only starting recently, there is no return or washing-up yet made.

Sea-beaches.

The sea-beach claims north of the Buller River are now practically worked out. For many years they supported a large population, but of late they have been getting poorer from year to year, and now furnish only a precarious existence for a few men who are mostly old-age pensioners. In fact, it is more than probable that without the aid which the pension affords these old miners would be compelled to abandon their claims.

Dredging.

A very large number of dredging areas have recently been taken up in the Westport district. In fact, nearly all the rivers and streams from the Okari in the south to the Oparara in the north