

the output of gold, but in the meantime it is having the contrary effect, as hundreds of men are now engaged in connection with dredging that were working claims of their own.

I have not been able to check the gold-returns this year as compared with last year, but I shall not be surprised to learn that in some districts a considerable falling-off has taken place, due to the dredging-boom, and in a lesser degree, to so many men being employed on roadworks.

I have, &c.,

D. MACFARLANE, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Dunedin, 20th April, 1900.

I have the honour to forward herewith my statistical returns respecting the Hindon Goldfields for the year 1899–1900. Nothing of any importance has been done on the field during that time. The number of miners remains the same as last year (under fifty).

The chief alluvial workings are those of the Deep Stream Amalgamated Hydraulic Sluicing Company (Limited), which is still paying dividends, but the yield of gold for the first year is less by 369 oz. than that of 1898–1899.

Some prospecting areas have been taken up on the Taieri River with a view to ulterior dredging operations, but so far without result.

Quartz-mining is at a standstill, the Barewood Company having done no work owing to litigation.

Miners are still distributed over the field fossicking and working ground about the old workings.

I have, &c.,

H. A. STRATFORD, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Lawrence, 26th April, 1900.

I have the honour to forward to you herewith statistical returns for the year ended the 31st March ultimo, and submit the following report on the several mining districts under my charge for the same period :—

The activity in mining still continues. A large number of applications have been lodged in all the Courts throughout my district.

LAWRENCE.

Three dredges have been working during the past year on the Tuapeka Flat and River, below the Lawrence Township.

The Evans Flat and Tuapeka Dredging Companies have obtained fair returns and paid monthly dividends. Messrs. J. Harris and party's dredge has been working steadily, with fair average returns.

The Balclutha Dredging Company, who held a claim about six miles below Lawrence, on the Tuapeka River, went into liquidation during the year, and sold the dredge and claim to a local syndicate. A new company was formed and called the "Lawrence Dredging Company (Limited)." The old dredge was overhauled and almost made new; it started work in January last, and by the end of March had paid a three-shilling dividend. The property is considered a good one and likely to last for some years.

WETHERSTONE'S.

The Golden Rise Dredge has been working on the Wetherstone's Flat for the whole of the year, with fair returns. It is the property of a private party, viz.: Messrs. Smyth, Adams, and Donlan, who also hold a hydraulic-sluicing claim in the same locality, still yielding, I understand, very good returns.

The Golden Crescent Sluicing Company (Limited) have now got their hydraulic-sluicing claim opened up. The directors are satisfied with the returns so far, and are of opinion that they have a good property. The water-race is completed and is bringing in about eight heads of water from Deep Creek, Waipori, to Wetherstone's, a distance of about seventeen miles, at a cost of about £4,000.

BLUE SPUR.

The Blue Spur and Gabriel's Gully Consolidated Gold Company (Limited), (Mr. J. H. Jackson, general manager), has been working steadily for the greater part of the year. The yield of gold was 2,753 oz., valued at £10,875.

Messrs J. Kitto and party are still working their claim at the head of Munro's Gully, with satisfactory returns.

Messrs Mills and Browne have shifted their hydraulic plant lower down below the mouth of Munro's Gully, and are, I understand, doing fairly well. They have a good water-race, and have had a fair supply of water nearly the whole of the summer.

DREDGING ON THE CLUTHA RIVER.

The Clutha River from the Tuapeka Mouth to the Talla Burn, above the Beaumont, a distance of about twenty miles, has all been pegged out, and special dredging-claims have been granted over the greater part, and a number of applications are still pending. So far, only one dredge is at work on this part of the river, viz.: the Sunlight, working at Horse-shoe Bend with varied success.