

reason to doubt the accuracy of the statement. It accounts for twenty-five dredges, but affords no indication of the proportions won by individual dredges, nor of the number of hours worked by each individual dredge.

There is one result which may be worth noting—that is, that it indicates that the average working-time of these dredges would be forty-two weeks a year. I should imagine this to be rather a high average, and much higher than that of dredges working on the Clutha River. It is certain that claims which lie in the beds of the large rivers must incur a loss of time from floods, to which the great majority of the Grey district claims are not liable.

I give hereunder the Greymouth *Evening Star* return, and also a return of some individual dredges, kindly furnished me by the secretaries of some of the most successful dredges, for the same period.

Evening Star Return of the West Coast Dredging for the First Quarter of 1901-2.

The following is a comparative statement showing the number of working dredges, the total yield of gold per week, with average yield per dredge per week, for the first quarter of 1901 and 1902:—

1901.				1902.			
Week.	Dredges working.	Total Yield.	Average per Dredge.	Week.	Dredges working.	Total Yield.	Average per Dredge.
		Oz. dwt. gr.	Oz. dwt. gr.			Oz. dwt. gr.	Oz. dwt. gr.
Jan. 5 ...	...	...	...	Jan. 4 ...	5	72 12 0	14 10 9
" 12 ...	1	14 7 12	14 7 12	" 11 ...	14	408 15 0	29 3 22
" 19 ...	5	149 0 0	29 16 0	" 18 ...	21	612 6 0	29 3 2
" 26 ...	5	60 2 0	12 0 9	" 25 ...	18	494 7 0	27 9 0
Feb. 2 ...	3	82 17 0	27 12 8	Feb. 1 ...	20	515 1 0	25 15 1
" 9 ...	6	152 10 0	25 9 6	" 8 ...	24	602 17 12	25 2 11
" 16 ...	7	223 13 0	31 16 0	" 15 ...	25	739 10 0	29 11 2
" 23 ...	5	146 0 0	29 4 0	" 22 ...	24	692 15 3	28 9 0
Mar. 2 ...	6	136 9 0	22 15 15	Mar. 1 ...	24	617 8 9	25 14 10
" 9 ...	6	87 1 0	14 10 3	" 8 ...	23	628 15 23	27 6 18
" 16 ...	4	83 9 0	20 17 6	" 15 ...	18	502 15 12	27 18 14
" 23 ...	6	120 4 6	20 0 16	" 22 ...	23	596 16 12	25 18 23
" 30 ...	7	107 1 14	15 3 2	" 29 ...	25	632 11 6	25 6 12

Time.	Yield of Gold.	Number of Weeks Dredging.	Average per Dredge per Week.
	Oz. dwt. gr.		Oz. dwt.
Quarter, 1902 ...	7,116 13 5	261	27 5
Quarter, 1901 ...	1,353 4 22	61	22 2
Increases ...	5,763 8 7	200	5 3

Returns of Seven Dredges given by Secretaries for Quarter ended the 31st March, 1902.

	Gold.	Value.
	Oz.	£
Nelson Creek ...	901	3,515
Pactolus ...	798	3,141
Al ...	323	1,291
Buller Junction ...	237	917
Reeves's Proprietary ...	215	852
Leviathan ...	436	1,744
North Beach ...	301	1,204
Total ...	3,211	£12,664

I think it will be apparent from the latter return that no advantage is obtained by averaging the returns of dredges, but that averages are apt to be misleading. On the other hand, it is important to note the total return of gold won, and the amounts won by the several dredges. Those returns do prove that gold is in the district in considerable quantities; that in some cases the claims are very rich, and in some other cases in payable quantities. As to the actual or apparent failure of some dredges, and the unsatisfactory returns of some others, it must not be taken as conclusive evidence that gold is not found in payable quantities on their claims. Without naming particular dredges, it is certain that the cause of failure has been either the ill design or the ill construction of the dredge—want of adaptation to the heavy work required of it. In other cases there has been inefficient management.

I append a list of companies on the Coast which have gone into liquidation. They are thirty-two in number, and of these the first eighteen are in my district. Those marked with an asterisk (nine in number) had dredges constructed:—