

Argyle Syndicate.—The continuation of operations on this lead—formerly worked on Maori Reserve—was suspended on account of some local difference, but the syndicate having made fresh arrangements with the Native agent the arrangements for the new tenure are nearing completion, and regular washings are anticipated to commence about the beginning of the year.

Ross.

Mont d'Or.—Other than the ordinary routine of continuous sluicing and carrying forward the various pipe-lines and other essentials on the face there is nothing to report. Recent devices in gold-saving have not yet been seriously considered.

South Bank, Mikonui River.—Messrs. Salmon and Nelson having acquired mining rights to prospect the black-sand leads of the south bank, Mikonui River, are now erecting machinery calculated to test the values and depths of the deposits. If successful in the venture, machinery will be erected to treat the deposits exhaustively.

OKARITO.

Omarua District.—During the wet season there are three parties of six men making fair wages in the terraces, water being available only in heavy rainfalls.

Five-mile and Waikukupu beaches have been exceptionally favourable for the beach-combers during the latter end of the year, as the increased quantity of sands exposed by the heavy action of the sea has been somewhat phenomenal. Similar conditions are also experienced in Bruce Bay.

Duffer's Creek.—Bamford's, Carther's, and Gladon's are the only parties working—six men in all; whilst George McArthur is prospecting in the back ranges on Government subsidy.

Wataroa River.—There are only six miners working on this creek, earning a weekly average wage of £2.

Waiho River furnishes employment to six parties of two and three men, who earn fair wages during spells of dry weather.

Taylor, Watson, and party are driving a drainage-tunnel to unwater their shaft.

DREDGING.

Although the dredging industry may be rightly said to be only comparatively emerging from the past wild speculative depression to the position of a more promising legitimate industry, yet even under present conditions there is a tendency in which further indulgence in speculation may effect still greater disaster. But if dredging is to enjoy a season of progressive prosperity judicious management combined with largely increased efficiency in dredge-construction and gold-saving appliances must be regarded as essential factors in building up industrial development. If the auriferous deposits peculiar to the West Coast river-beds and flats are to be properly treated as repositories of submerged wealth, the applied skill of the mining and of the mechanical engineer must act conjointly so as to effect one common and coveted object. Unhappily, for past results shareholders are largely to blame, for, notwithstanding the payable and uniform returns recently maintained by some of our best regulated dredges there are other monetary conditions worthy of consideration before dredging may be regarded as a lucrative and safe commercial investment. Regarding the ruinous stoppages caused by breakage of machinery, &c., it is a fact that not a few of these accidents are easily traceable to careless and unsystematic inspection of the working parts either by the dredgemaster or other person responsible. Now that legislation has enacted that every dredgemaster on deep and swift-flowing rivers shall be the holder of a certificate of competency, it is desirable that a closer inspection of working parts and safety appliances should be compulsory and reported upon daily, such report being recorded in a book to be kept on the dredge for that purpose and signed by the person reporting.

It is to be regretted that seven accidents, four of them fatal, reported from this district were clearly due to rashness and carelessness on the part of each of the persons injured.