

their labours our gold-returns this year have increased. All available water has been taken up and utilised for washing purposes. The time is not far distant when greater attention will be paid to the utilisation of our mountain-streams as a motive power for many of our industries, and care must be exercised in not dealing too freely with our natural power without due consideration as to its future possibilities for elevating and hydraulic mining.

Our experience of dredging has not been very satisfactory, a number of the companies having gone into liquidation, mainly owing to light and defective machinery and the depth and tightness of the material dealt with. In this respect our sea-beaches are more likely to pay for working.

PROSPECTING-TRACKS.

The utility of the above-mentioned tracks is becoming more apparent in this district every year—especially I might mention the tracks up the Callery and the Great South Road. At Omarua there are extensive terraces that will require some very careful investigation by the prospectors of the district, and with careful investment of capital and labour I predict a great increase of population following up this industry. Further extension of these tracks, I deem, would be very safe expenditure on behalf of the public bodies. Before any expenditure is undertaken I would suggest that proper investigation of the ground should be made as to the suitability of the route for tracks. Those made up to the Whitcombe Pass may lead to prosperous results, as there are many different parties there investigating the resources of that part of the district. Prospectors are also exploring the upper reaches of the Taipo River. If any find of importance takes place there it may be very extensive, as there is a large extent of almost unprospected ground in that locality, and there is ample water in the district to carry out extensive sluicing operations, and ample timber for all mining purposes.

The works most urgently required in connection with mining on the Coast are an adequate water-supply for Back Creek and Seddon's Terrace, and prospecting-tracks to the back country. A plentiful supply of water would give direct returns to the investors. Tracks are more the duties of the authorities, as the returns are more indirect.

TIMBER, ETC.

The timber trade is being largely developed, the output being limited by the want of facilities for getting it away.

Flax-milling is now being successfully carried on, and a very superior article placed on the market.

The railway to Ross is now under construction, employing a large number of men. The bridge over the Hokitika River is under construction. This combined with the railway to Ross will give an impetus to the southern trade that will largely benefit Hokitika.

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS.

The following is a summary of business and a statement of revenue collected in the Warden's Court during the year ending the 31st December, 1902:—

Hokitika.—Fees on applications, £17 6s.; miners' rights, £67 10s.; registrations, £8 11s.; licenses, £14 5s.; searches, £1 16s.; fees and fines, £6 6s.; rents, £455 4s. 10d.; miscellaneous, 15s.; total, £571 13s. 10d.

Kumara.—Mining applications received 119, value £11 18s.; miners' rights issued 292, value £73; licenses issued, 50; rents received, £557 11s. 2d.; fees and fines received, £52 12s.; search fees, £3 5s.; miscellaneous receipts, £335 16s. 10d.; total, £1,034 3s.

Ross.—Special claims granted 8, area 610 acres; extended claims granted 3, area 9 acres; ordinary claims granted 1, area 1 acre; prospecting licenses granted 10, area 760 acres; residence-sites licenses granted 2, area 2 acres; water-race licenses granted 7, length 9 miles 22 chains; dam licenses granted, 2; tramway licenses granted 1, length 60 chains; sawmill licenses and certificates of reservation 2, area 400 acres; hand-sawing and timber-cutting warrants 2, area 40 acres; applications received 205, value £20 10s.; miners' rights issued 115, value £28 15s.; licenses issued 13, value £3 5s.; rent received, £501 19s. 8d.; fees and fines, £3 7s.; searches, 1s.; registrations, £8 13s.; miscellaneous, £1 11s. 6d.; total, £568 2s. 2d.

Stafford and Goldsborough.—Mining applications 85, value £8 10s.; miners' rights issued 150, value £27 10s.; licenses issued 28, value £7; fees and fines received 8, value £3 10s.; searches made 3, value 3s.; miscellaneous (royalties, &c.) 4, value £121 14s. 7d.; registrations and transfers 233, value £11 13s.; total, £180 0s. 7d.

Okarito.—Applications received 49, value £4 18s.; miners' rights issued 61, value £15 5s.; licenses issued, 48; rents received, £283 9s. 10d.; miscellaneous receipts, £22 18s. 9d.; search fees, 2s.; fees and fines, Okarito Court, £2 18s.; total, £329 17s. 7d.