

McDonald's Hydraulic Sluicing and Elevating Claim, Upper Nevis (R. McDonald, manager).—Operations are still being conducted on The Remarkables side of the Upper Nevis Flat. Returns are favourable, and it is possible that an early start will be made to bring in a race at a higher level for a water-supply to enable the deep ground to be worked by elevating. Six men are employed.

O'Connell and Graham's Hydraulic Sluicing Claim, Upper Nevis.—This property is owned by a private syndicate. The returns obtained are said to amply justify the expenditure incurred in laying down the sluicing-plant, and bringing in the water-race. The electric light is in use on this claim for night-work.

Undaunted Sluicing Claim, Upper Nevis.—Heavy floods in the Nevis River carried away the head of the flume, and operations on that area became suspended. A water-race was then brought in from the Little Scotchman Gully to command ground at the head of the claim. It was intended to work this by hydraulic sluicing and elevating, and at the time of inspection the manager was laying down the sluicing plant.

On the 22nd December, 1903, a few weeks after my visit, the manager, Mr. R. Williamson, was working in a trench about 10 ft. deep for the purpose of laying the pressure-pipes under the road-line, when one of the walls collapsed off a slippery back inflicting injuries which resulted in death. The Coroner's Jury brought in a verdict of "Accidental death," no blame attachable to anyone, and the jury were satisfied that the accident could not have been foreseen owing to the slip off an invisible greasy back.

NOKOMAI.

Golden Lion Claim, Nokomai (D. MacGregor, manager).—Hydraulic elevating, 108 ft. in one lift. The claim has not been properly reopened this season. When the frost broke up and the water began to come in again, pumping operations were started, but for various reasons—chiefly financial—no progress was made. Should sufficient money be raised to give the claim a further trial the wash will probably be driven out. This will do away with the necessity for elevating about 90 ft. of barren overburden. Mr. Cummings, the secretary, was interviewed at his office in Invercargill, and his attention drawn to various matters in relation to the safe working of the claim, should the method of underground-mining be adopted. Some driving had been done before the previous winter set in when operations were suspended. A start is now being made to clear out the drives and get the claim in working-order preparatory to systematically blocking out the auriferous wash. The main drive is in 128 ft. and the ground stands well, only the roof requiring to be close-timbered. Should driving operations be prosecuted it will be necessary at an early date for the company to consider the advisability of sinking a shaft for ventilation and second outlet purposes. Nine men are employed in and about the works. The claim is advertised for sale.

Nokomai No. I Sluicing Claim, Nokomai (J. Roberston, manager).—Work in this claim is prosecuted steadily and with satisfactory results, the claim being a consistent gold-producer. The sluicing and elevating plant is well handled by the manager who employs on the average fifteen men in and about the claim. Throughout the valley the average depth is 40 ft. The material is very compact schistose debris and the paddock-walls stand very well when opened out. A new paddock was being opened out at the time of inspection, and some 20 ft. had to be sunk through before main bottom would be reached.

Nokomai No. II. Sluicing Claim, Nokomai.—Unlike the No. I. claim this plant is elevating comparatively shallow ground. The material, which averages 15 ft. in depth, is easily elevated. The water-supply and pressure are poor, and after being elevated about 26 ft., the tailings require to be blown away from the dump which entails loss of both time and water. About fifteen men, of whom Chinese form the greater part, are employed in and about this claim.

J. Copland has a ground-sluicing claim above the Nokomai No. II. Company's claim, the overflow of water from which enables him to work.

Victory Hydraulic Sluicing and Elevating Company, Nokomai (W. France, manager).—The original company went into liquidation and the property was bought by Mr. France and several other large shareholders. A new dam was built and the water-supply improved, but further operations have not apparently met with the desired success.

WAIKAIA.

Argyle Sluicing Company, Waikaia (J. Stewart, manager).—Under efficient management the work done on this claim is of a very progressive nature, and the results are in accordance therewith. Nine men are usually employed. It is proposed to put a dredge, worked by water-power, on the lower part of this claim above where the Hessey Company's dredge is operating successfully. For this reason elevating operations have been discontinued on the flat and the water transferred to a large area of adjoining terrace-ground.

Winding Creek Hydraulic Sluicing Claim, Waikaia.—Some work has been done on this property by a party of tributers when water was available. The company recently sold out to a small local syndicate.

Gow's Creek, Gold-mining Company, Waikaia.—Nothing done during the year. The plant is being dismantled for removal.

Piano Flat Gold-mining Company, Waikaia.—Operations proving unsuccessful the claim was closed down and plant has been idle throughout the year.

Chow Yoke and Party's Claim, Whitecombe.—D. Matheson, jun., to whom this property belongs, had two men driving last winter for a few months. There are a number of small claimholders scattered over this district, principally in the higher altitudes, where only summer work is practicable.

CHARLTON.

Ewen McGregor's Alluvial Claim, Mataura River.—The claim is situated opposite Charlton on an alluvial flat on the banks of the Mataura River. A plant has been installed consisting of a boiler, engine,