

Mr. Warden ROBERTS, Tauranga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Tauranga, 8th March, 1904.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular, No. 1 of the 23rd January last, and in reply thereto beg to report for your information as follows :—

During the twelve months ended the 31st December, 1903, a considerable amount of development-work was carried out in the early part of the year by an Auckland syndicate, who held an option over the Te Puke Gold Reefs Company's property. In the early part of the year there appeared to be a fair prospect of the mine being floated, and the necessary capital to work it being raised, but the option-holders have thrown up their option, and the property has reverted back to the company.

No other work of importance has been done on the field.

The forms forwarded with your circular are filled up and attached hereto.

I have, &c.,

J. M. ROBERTS, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

Mr. Warden SMITH, Blenheim, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Blenheim, 13th May, 1904.

I have the honour to report that during the year ended the 31st December last, the gold-mining industry made but little, if any, progress in the Marlborough Mining District. Quartz-mining was practically confined to the operations of the Jubilee Company at Top Valley, and its operations were apparently none too successful, for in December it was found necessary to shut down with a view to reconstructing the company for the purpose of obtaining additional capital to exploit the reef in deep ground. During the year, however, this company has given employment, on an average, to twenty-two men, and has done about 290 ft. of driving and crosscutting. 1,704 tons of stone was crushed for a yield of 548 oz., and 1,100 tons of sand was treated by the cyanide process, producing 72 oz. of gold; the total value of the gold obtained being £2,118 17s. 3d. It is estimated that a tunnel 1,200 ft. in length will require to be driven to give from 500 ft. to 600 ft. of backs on the reef, but as this tunnel will be a crosscut, it is hoped that other lodes will be intersected during the prosecution of the work.

As regards dredging, of the two companies in operation, it may be said that the Golden Point dredge at Wakamarina was swamped during a flood in July last, and has only recently been raised and placed in working-order on the claim. Prior to the accident, small returns were obtained, but the shareholders have not so far received any return for the capital invested.

At Arm Chair Creek the Alpine Gold-dredging Company's operations have been delayed by a series of misfortunes. A dredge, formerly known as the Omdurman, was purchased from the Egmont Company, the intention being to place it on the claim in Arm Chair Creek, whither it was to work its way by dredging. Before, however, a start was made, a flood came down the creek in which the dredge was moored, and she capsized. Having been placed in working-order again at a cost of about £600, another flood was experienced, and on this occasion, the dredge, which was, it seems, not properly secured, was carried about half a mile down the creek, where she now lies stranded.

No alluvial mining of any consequence is carried on, the miners so engaged being mostly old men, who do a little fossicking.

Speaking of other industries, the proposed manufacture of cement and lime at or near the Elevation, Picton, may be mentioned. A company was formed and registered for this purpose during the year under review, the scene of the operations originally intended being the Meadowbank Estate, near Blenheim; but it has since been decided to abandon that site, and work the cement formation near Picton, and machinery has been ordered for the purpose.

At Wakamarina, there is, I understand, a great demand among the sawmillers for bush for milling purposes.

The usual statistical returns are forwarded herewith.

I have, &c.,

T. SCOTT SMITH, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

Mr. Warden HEAPS, Nelson, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Nelson, 19th May, 1904.

Pursuant to the request contained in your Circular No. 1 of the 23rd January last, I have the honour to enclose herewith the forms of return forwarded therewith duly filled up as far as information was available; also, I submit the following report on the condition of the mining industry in the district of Karamea North for the year ended the 31st December, 1903.

Last year I had to report that the year had been unsatisfactory from a mining point of view; this year it has been more so; little if any fresh enterprise having been shown.

*Dredging.*—This branch of mining has so far been a complete failure. Five special dredging claims of an aggregate area of 323 acres were surrendered during the year. Out of the five dredges which were completed and in working-order at the beginning of the year, only one is now at work, and it is in fresh hands and on fresh ground. It is confidently expected that under the new management good results will be obtained.

*Sluicing.*—The Parapara Hydraulic Sluicing and Mining Company and the Slate River Sluicing Company are the principal companies at work.