

Rimu No. 1 dredge only worked during the first two months of the year. As it could not be made to pay it was then laid up. The high cost of working and inability to secure supplies owing to war conditions were given as the main reasons for this action, but it would appear that the trouble lay in the fact that the dredge was neither large nor powerful enough to cope with the heavy ground encountered.

The Success dredge did fairly well through the year, handling about 400,000 yards of material.

The Kapitea dredge also did well.

The Hessey, Cameron, and Tacon dredge resumed work at Caplestone towards the end of the year.

The Westland Prospecting Syndicate has been energetically getting ready to work its ground in the Arahura Valley. The Workop No. 2 dredge was purchased and removed to the Arahura, where it has now been re-erected and will shortly be in commission. The pontoon has been lengthened and more powerful boiler plant installed. This, it is expected, will enable the dredge to work, if necessary, at a greater depth than formerly. The spot at which this dredge has now been launched is not far from the old Humphrey's Gully sluicing claim, on a prospecting claim held by the syndicate. It is intended, however, to work with it certain portions of the Arahura Native Reserve, which the syndicate has received permission to do on the condition that the soil is replaced on top of the tailings in some such way as practised at various places in Otago. To enable this to be done the dredge has now been provided with an extra shoot apart from the ordinary tailings-shoot, which projects out 20 ft. farther than the latter. The two shoots are side by side, and at the tumbler end a door is so arranged that the material being handled can be immediately diverted into one shoot or the other according as gravel or soil is being dredged. There is no reason why this arrangement should not fully carry out the intentions for which it was designed, and if it does the result should be that these upper sections of the reserve should be left in a more valuable condition for pastoral purposes than they are at present. A large quantity of valuable white-pine (probably 1,500,000 sup. ft.) is growing on the area to be dredged. In order that this may not be destroyed the syndicate has installed a sawmill to cut it, and this is now in full working-order, employing ten men, and putting out 4,000 to 5,000 sup. ft. per day. The syndicate, it may also be mentioned, has also purchased the Ahaura dredge, said to be the largest in the Dominion, and this also is to be removed to the Arahura, where it will be placed in the river near Hungerford's bridge. At the present time it is dredging its way out of the stream at the Ahaura River to a spot where it will be dismantled, three shifts of men being employed to push the work on. The Westland Prospecting Syndicate is to be commended for its enterprise and the energy with which it has carried on its operations under difficult conditions, and it is to be hoped that its undertakings will bring it the reward it well deserves.

Alluvial Mining.

MARLBOROUGH.

Very little work has been done in this part of the district, the only returns being 3 oz. 10 dwt.

COLLINGWOOD.

There has been only one return furnished, and this for a very small quantity of gold.

HOWARD DIGGINGS.

The number of miners here has still further shrunk to twenty-five. Most of the old claims have been worked out, and no fresh finds have taken place.

MURCHISON.

Hunter's at Matakitaiki and Beilby, Richardson, and Lewis's claims at Horse Terrace are still the only producing ones.

ADDISON'S FLAT.

Addison's Limited.—This property resumed operations and recovered some gold, as did also W. Williamson and party in the same locality, and Mouat and party, working a beach claim at Fairdown.

CHARLESTON.

Powell Bros.' beach claim has worked steadily, also Butterworth and Norris.

One other small claim returned 8 oz. Only eleven men in all were employed.

GREY VALLEY.

Hochstetter Goldfields (Limited).—The construction of the tunnels on the water-race has been pushed on energetically, an average of thirty-three men being employed. It is expected that the whole work will be completed early in 1919, and sluicing operations should therefore be begun within a few months at most. The company has had a great struggle to carry this work on to the present stage, the expenditure to date having been about £100,000.

The Grey Valley Sluicing Company at Goat Terrace and the Maori Gully sluicing claim (T. Costigan) both produced gold, and at No. Town Robertson's claim also made a return. Several other small claims worked, but the results were poor.