

RETURN showing the TOTAL and COMPARATIVE AMOUNT of GOLD brought down by Escort for each Month and Quarter since the discovery of Gabriel's, in July, 1861.

	1861.		1862.		1863.		1864.		1865.		
	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	Oz. Dwt.	
January.....	...	...	47,391	0	48,567	5	32,335	14	20,863	8
February...	...	...	42,473	0	72,311	14	38,042	7	22,025	1
March.....	...	...	32,202	5	46,691	12	37,614	18	24,590	16
April.....	...	...	22,862	10	122,066	5	70,010	12	107,992	19
May.....	...	...	22,945	10	167,570	11	43,649	11	67,484	5
June.....	...	...	12,876	10	58,684	10	22,141	15	118,636	12
July.....	...	...	10,375	18	30,398	9	24,323	7	...	...
August.....	5,056	0	14,186	0	161,255	5	28,906	5	...	...
September..	19,039	15	12,618	6	94,463	17	26,353	16	79,583	8	
October.....	46,613	5	38,777	14	40,612	14	29,939	8	...	...
November...	73,904	0	37,664	18	43,803	8	33,283	18	...	...
December...	58,870	0	37,260	1	57,955	6	24,527	17	...	...
Totals...	...	179,387	5	113,702	13	142,371	8	87,851	3	...	
	...	203,483	0	331,633	12	565,661	1	394,064	2	67,484	5

GRAND TOTAL 1,562,326 ounces.

15. *Population.*—From the annexed Return of Immigration and Emigration, it appears that the population of the Province has been diminished during the year ending 31st March, by 8399 male adults; whilst there has been an increase of 501 female adults, and 313 children—leaving an actual total decrease of 7585 souls. From Great Britain we have received an accession to our population of 781 male and 517 female adults. On the other hand, 3440 males have returned to the Australian Colonies, and other 5740 have departed coastwise. Of the latter upwards of 4000 left in March alone—a circumstance accounted for by the West Coast discoveries. Of course these figures only represent Immigration and Emigration seawards from the Port of Dunedin, and would no doubt be materially altered if the Immigration and Emigration landward—*i.e.*, through other Provinces—could be ascertained.

16. *Census.*—By the Census of December, 1864, the total population of the Gold Fields was enumerated at 15,700 persons. Of these certainly not more than 10,000 were actually miners, and at present (31st March) I estimate them at only 7000. In April, May, and June last over 6000 left for Wakamarina, and although many of these returned to Otago, numbers went straight back to Australia. I therefore estimate the average mining population during the last twelve months at, say, 10,000 male adults. The return of gold during the same period (not reckoning for such as is taken out of the Province clandestinely) amounts to 396,097 ounces, of the estimated value of £1,584,388. This will give an average wage to every gold miner in Otago of forty ounces or £155 per annum; or 15½ dwts., value £2 19s. 4d., per week. Without seeking to draw any invidious comparisons, I think I may safely challenge any other gold-mining country in the world to show an equally splendid return.

17. *Settlement.*—From the attached return it will be seen that 175 applications have been made for agricultural leases, covering 1693 acres 3 roods, and that 508 residence areas, comprising 238 acres 1 rood, have been taken up under the Gold Fields Regulations, giving a total for settlement of 1932 acres. This system of leasing for agricultural purposes has lately been suspended with a view to the sale of the lands, which, owing to the obstructive nature of the 48th Section of "The Gold Fields Act, 1862," cannot be effected concurrently with the operation of that Act. But I am strongly of opinion that a return to the leasing system, with an extension of the area to, say, 100 acres, would be most beneficial both to the people and to the Province. If auriferous land is only leased, it can be reserved upon discovery of its true character; but if once sold, it is lost to the State for ever.

18. *Systematic Mining.*—The same Return informs us that 76 gold-mining leases, covering 370 acres, have been applied for; and that 594 Extended Claims (requiring five men to the acre), comprising 620 acres, have also been taken up. The comparison suggested between the two systems is instructive. The Extended Land Claim Regulations were only assented to by His Honor the Superintendent in August 31, 1864. Yet in the short space of seven months a larger area has been taken up under their simple conditions (and by *bona fide* working parties of miners) than in the twenty-one months during which the more complicated leasing system has been in operation: the proportion of Extended Claims to Mining Leases being in number as nearly eight to one, and in area as five to three.