

7. The Kumara Gold Field, the discovery of which caused great excitement about ten months ago, is situated about half-way between Hokitika and Greymouth, and it certainly is a most remarkable instance of what can be produced in a few months by a gold rush. I found over 4,300 persons permanently established upon the ground, and a town had sprung up which presented few of the characteristics of a new gold field town, the houses being more regular and of a larger and more substantial character than I have ever before seen on a new gold field. Three or four good-sized hotels were already occupied, and numerous shops and stores of considerable pretensions might be seen in all directions, either completed or in course of construction; and after riding over a portion of the field I was entertained at a luncheon to which about 120 sat down in a large and substantial public hall. The whole of this has been the creation of less than ten months, as in June last the whole place was a dense bush.

8. What makes the rapid progress of this field the more extraordinary is that, so far, no great amount of gold has been actually raised from it. Many, if not most, of the claims have to be approached by long tunnels driven into the sides of the hills, which take months to complete; besides which, great difficulty has been experienced in obtaining a good supply of water at a proper level for washing. This latter difficulty, however, will, I hope, soon be overcome, as means have been discovered by which, I trust, an ample supply will be secured, and this, in the opinion of the old and experienced miners, is all that is required to secure the complete success of these diggings.

9. This field was originally discovered by three or four men, who managed to keep their discovery secret for about two years, during which time I understand that the average yield of the claim worked by them was about £10 a man per week.

10. From Kumara I proceeded to Greymouth, which, like Hokitika, is situated on the banks of a river which forms a bar harbour.

11. A short railway has lately been constructed from Greymouth to some coal mines in the neighbourhood. One mine has been in operation for some time, and it produces, I believe, the best coal which has as yet been worked in New Zealand. There are also two other mines, which will shortly commence working, the coal from which, it is hoped, will be of a still better quality, as, although from the same seam, the coal is taken at a greater depth. The seam is a very large one, being twelve to fifteen feet thick, and there can be no doubt as to the quantity which can be raised. The only difficulty I foresee is the question as to whether, taking price and quality into consideration, they will be able fairly to compete with the coal from New South Wales, as the bar at the entrance of the harbour is a bad one, and is frequently impassable, which will necessarily add considerably to the cost of the shipment, and consequently to the price at which the coal can be put into the market.

12. From Greymouth I went to Westport, where efforts are also being made to open out a large coal district. About fifteen miles of railway have been constructed by the Government, with the view of facilitating the shipment of coal. These mines are not as yet opened out, but I was shown various specimens of coal, which appeared to be of a superior quality. The harbour of Westport is also a bar harbour, but it is much more sheltered than either Hokitika or Greymouth, and, except with a northerly wind, is generally accessible to vessels of not more than eleven feet draught.

13. The opening out of these coal mines both at Westport and Greymouth is exciting much interest, and great hopes are entertained as to the success of this new industry; and there can be no doubt that the production of good and cheap coal in the colony, even if it is confined to the supply of the local market, would prove of inestimable value to New Zealand, and I trust that the attempt may prove successful.

14. The reception which was accorded to me as Her Majesty's representative was everywhere most cordial and enthusiastic, and I found the people uniformly contented, prosperous, and hopeful as to the future.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. the Earl of Carnarvon,

NORMANBY.