

tinuously worked for the last sixteen years, may be reasonably expected to have yielded up the best of its treasures. Already some very good washings-up have been obtained in the new ground, although but few claims are really opened out. In other parts of the district sluicing has gone on as usual, the only difference being that a more constant and abundant supply of water has enabled the miners to work more continuously and to realize better returns than usual.

2. Some excitement was occasioned in the winter by the report of a very rich patch being struck at Fullarton's, near Hyde. It appeared that a man named Holverson, who had been working alone for a number of years at a place known as Wheelbarrow Hill, had actually discovered an extraordinarily rich deposit, from which, in the course of a few days, he obtained several hundred pounds' worth of gold. He had for a long time been convinced that a heavy deposit of gold was there, and had been working against great discouragements to reach it. Other miners immediately marked off claims all around, and the ground was fairly rushed; but as yet no other claims have given any satisfactory result. Most of the claims are at present unworked; but any new "find" would have the effect of renewing the excitement, as the ground in the neighbourhood of Fullarton's is well known to have in former days yielded many a handsome "pile."

3. Quartz mining has not prospered so well as alluvial washing. Indeed, it may be said to be at present entirely at a standstill. The mines at Rough Ridge have been stopped for a time, as also the working of the Serpentine Quartz-mining Company; but it is not unlikely that both will soon be in work again. At Serpentine several reefs are known to exist, some of which have given very good prospects, and are regarded as valuable properties by the holders.

4. The settlement of the country by the taking-up of land on agricultural leases and deferred payment has continued to go on, although not quite so rapidly as last year, when there was a general rush for land. The area taken up during the year has been, on agricultural leases, 2,301 acres and 25 perches; and on deferred payment, 4,965 acres 3 roods. There are at present in the district, held under agricultural lease, 25,448 acres 2 roods 15 perches; and on deferred payment, 19,522 acres 2 roods 29 perches: making a grand total of 44,971 acres 1 rood 4 perches held under the two systems. During the year 866 acres 1 rood 9 perches, previously held under agricultural leases, have been converted into freehold; and several agricultural leases, for a total area of 810 acres 3 roods 23 perches, have been exchanged for deferred-payment licenses.

5. There is still a demand for more land to be opened; and, no doubt, if blocks of reasonable area are from time to time proclaimed about the district, the sections will be taken up—especially if there seems to be a fair prospect of the Otago Central Railway being gone on with.

6. The want of cheap and expeditious communication has of course had the effect of keeping back the permanent settlement of this country; but with anything like certainty of a railway being available within two or three years, any fair land that might be thrown open would be readily taken. At present the want of a market for produce seriously affects the cultivator, who may have valuable crops, but be quite unable to sell even enough to give him money for the current expenditure of his farm.

7. An effort is at present being made to start a flour-mill in the district. This movement, if successful, cannot fail to prove very beneficial to the farming interest, by making it worth while to raise wheat. Hitherto farmers have grown oats as their main crop, there being no market for wheat except for feeding fowls or pigs. It will also, in a less direct way, assist mining by tending to cheapen the cost of living on the gold fields.

8. The Government water-race, in the hands of the Mount Ida Water-race Trust, has continued to be of great service to the district, bringing in a fine supply of water, which has been largely availed of by the miners.

9. The total yield of gold for the season cannot be stated with certainty, but it may be roughly set down at 22,500 oz.

10. The number of persons actually employed in mining for gold shows a decided decrease as compared with former years. This falling-off is mainly to be attributed to the increase of settlement under the agricultural-leases and deferred-payment systems. The total population of the district has not diminished to any appreciable extent; but miners who have saved a little money have been glad to put themselves in the way of becoming freehold proprietors, and others have been induced to prefer the steady earnings of agricultural work to the more precarious gains of mining.

11. The total revenue collected at this office for the year has been as follows: Gold revenue (including mining-lease rents), £1,039 11s.; miscellaneous, £25 6s. 6d.; Warden's Court fees and fines, £32 5s.; agricultural-lease rents, £3,192 5s.; deferred-payment rents, £4,011 1s. 4d.: total, £8,300 9s. 10d.

12. I forward herewith the usual statistical returns.

I have, &c.,

W. H. ROBINSON,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

### No. 13.

Mr. Warden STRATFORD to the UNDER-SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Arrowtown, 2nd April, 1880.

I have the honor to forward herewith the statistical returns of the Wakatipu District, in compliance with your circular dated 13th March, 1880, and to add a general report for the year ending 31st March, 1880.

*Alluvial Mining.*—There are about 1,075 gold-miners in my district, and of these 700 to 800 are engaged in this industry—up the Shotover, ground-sluicing; at Macetown, and in the Arrow Valley, sluicing and tunnelling; and by the latter mode principally at Cardrona. On reference to the escort returns, you will find that the average yield of gold is about 13 oz., or equal to £50, per annum a