

given great impetus to agriculture; but I regret to hold the opinion that this industry will meet with a severe check in the coming season, at the Teviot and Bald Hill Flat Districts and elsewhere, unless the efforts of the Rabbit Trustees are successful, as this nuisance has assumed enormous proportions of late.

In my return of Warden's cases heard at the various Courts in which I preside, I have omitted any reference to applications; which, however, deserve some notice there, so as to give some idea of judicial work performed. Opposed applications are prosecuted and resisted with the same pertinacity, and occupy as much time, as cases or complaints in the Warden's Courts.

The amount of quartz crushed in the district, and the result, are as follows: Quartz crushed, 6,743 tons; yield of gold, 4,197 oz. These figures give the gold according to bank returns: the retorted gold would show a greater percentage.

I have, &c.,

JACKSON KEDDELL,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 15.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Lawrence, 22nd May, 1880.

I have the honor to forward, enclosed herewith, statistical returns respecting the Tuapeka Gold Field for the year ending 31st March, 1880.

During the year on which I now report, a considerable amount of prospecting, and that of a costly character, has been carried on with the view of thoroughly testing the auriferous-cement basins in the Wetherstone's and Waitahuna Districts. The result has not shown such success as was anticipated. The prospector's claim at Wetherstone's and two claims at Waitahuna are all that, up to the present time, have been proved to be payable. Prospecting deep cement workings is both tedious and expensive, and consequently the ground will take a long time to develop; but with the improvements going on to economize labour, a considerable area will eventually be brought into profitable work. To illustrate what a small proportion of gold can be made to yield a profit by systematic mining, I give the following particulars showing the result from the Wetherstone's Cement-mining Company's claim for three months of this year:—

	Working Days.	Tons crushed.	Yield of Gold.
January	23	1,994	163 oz. 15 dwt.
February	23	2,127	130 „ 10 „
March	20	1,760	114 „ 12 „

The cement was all crushed with a ten-stamp battery driven by water-power, and, although the yield averaged under a pennyweight and a half to the ton, there was a net profit for the three months of £500.

The yield of gold from the Blue Spur has been very large, although for some portion of the year there was a great scarcity of water, and crushing was consequently suspended. The greater portion of the gold forwarded from this district is the yield of this wonderful little hill, which has now been continuously worked for the last sixteen years. The Gabriel's Gully Company, holding an extensive special claim in Gabriel's Gully, are engaged in preliminary operations necessary to get their land into work. The system proposed to be followed in working the ground, principally old tailings from the Blue Spur, is quite new in New Zealand, and it is said that the small yield of a grain of gold to a ton of earth will pay the working expenses, and all over that yield will be profit.

In quartz mining very little has been done beyond prospecting. A very promising reef has been discovered a few miles from Waipori, and about 50 tons of stone raised from it, upon which large expectations are founded. Should this reef be a success, it will no doubt be a means of directing more attention to one of the best mineral districts in the colony. Already there are indications of a fresh start being made to develop some of its resources, applications having been made for a lease of an antimony lode and a license to prospect for cinnabar. The antimony was prospected several years ago, and a trial-shipment sent to Great Britain, which gave a satisfactory yield of gold.

The mining population has decreased, especially in Chinese. I estimate the numbers at present as follows: Europeans, 380; Chinese, 300.

The yield of gold for the year, the particulars of which I have obtained from the local bank managers, is 29,287 oz., being an increase of 2,593 oz. on the yield of the preceding year. This large return gives an average of over 43 oz. for each miner employed; but a large quantity of gold comes from a few rich claims, and this, therefore, cannot be accepted as a fair criterion of the prosperity of the miners generally.

The area of land held under agricultural leases has become considerably reduced by the holders exercising their right of purchasing in fee-simple. There are now in force 192 of those leases, for an area of 21,138 acres; 137 exchange leases, area 6,950 acres; and 149 deferred-payment leases, area 24,038 acres.

There has been very little demand to lease land: 6,000 acres have been proclaimed open for application; but only two leases have been taken up. This falling-off is occasioned partly from the land being of inferior quality for agriculture, and from the low price of produce, particularly oats, the most suitable crop for the poorer lands in this district.

The number of cases decided in the Resident Magistrate's Court at Lawrence during the year is as follows—civil, 320; criminal, 124; and in the other Resident Magistrate's Courts, in which I preside—civil, 275; criminal, 89. In the Warden's Court there were 53 cases entered, and about 200 applications dealt with.