

mercury. Very great expense and ingenuity have been devoted to these experiments in gold-saving by the well-known engineer, Mr. McQueen, of Dunedin, who is the chief promoter of this company.

Mr. Warden Wood's special report in the appendix shows the progress of the Gabriel's Gully Sluicing Company's special claim, Tuapeka, which was more particularly referred to in last year's general report. The Shotover Terrace, Wakatipu District, so famous in former years for its rich yield of gold, is again taken up by companies, and water is being brought from Stoney and Skipper's Creeks to wash away the terrace with over 100 feet of face.

#### YIELD OF GOLD.

The quarterly returns of gold entered for export at the Customs naturally exhibit considerable variations in quantity. Thus, the yield of gold for the year ending 31st December, 1881, as ascertained, from this source, shows a falling-off of 34,687 oz., against the yield for the same period in 1880, the yields and relative values being respectively 270,561 oz., value £1,080,790, and 305,248 oz., value £1,227,252; but, as will be seen by the following table, the returns for the four quarters ending 31st March, 1882 (the financial year), show an increase of 16,642 oz., value £59,244, over the returns for the year ending at the same date in 1881:—

YIELD of GOLD during Years ending 31st March, 1881, and 1882.

1880.			1881.		
	Oz.	Value.		Oz.	Value.
		£			£
June Quarter ...	71,619	288,105	June Quarter...	63,395	254,087
September Quarter ...	69,631	279,554	September Quarter ...	83,710	332,787
December Quarter ...	84,696	341,385	December Quarter ...	72,815	291,684
1881.			1882.		
March Quarter ...	50,641	202,232	March Quarter ...	73,309	291,962
	276,587	£1,111,276		293,229	£1,170,520

Increase during 1881, 16,642 oz., value £59,244.

The Statements Nos. 5 and 7, supplied by the Secretary of Customs, following the appendix, show in detail the quantity and value of gold entered for duty for exportation at the various ports during the year ending the 31st December, 1881; also comparative returns for the quarters ending 31st March, 1881 and 1882, from which it will be seen that the latter quarter gives an increased yield of 22,668 oz. over the former. The total yield of gold for the colony from 1857 to the 31st March, 1882, as taken from statistical returns, is 9,861,011 oz., of the value of £38,687,612.

#### MINING POPULATION AND ITS EARNINGS.

Return No. 9, following the appendix, shows the number of miners on the 31st March, 1882, as 14,714; and, as the number twelve months before that was 15,063, the mean number for the year is 14,889. Taking the value of gold exported during the same period, as has been done in former reports, as the quantity to be divided between its producers, without counting any which may be utilized in the colony, we have a total value of £1,170,520, giving an average earnings per man of £79 11s. for the twelve months ending 31st March, 1882, the average earnings per man for the year ending 31st March, 1881, being £75 8s. It is necessary to explain that these figures are only given approximately, as, through the changing of Wardens upon the gold fields, the returns of the estimated number of miners in the several districts show some variations which are not apparently supported by actual circumstances, and such variations of course affect the general results endeavoured to be shown above. As has been pointed out in former reports, such average annual earnings as from £70 to £80 per man would represent low average wages for men employed in colonial towns, with rent to pay and all the expenses incident to town life; but the miner, settling as he generally does upon his residence area, to which his annual miner's-right fee of