

The calls during the last year amounted to £61,344—a far greater amount than in any previous year since the opening of the district. This has doubtless contributed largely to the present very quiet state of the sharemarket. Large sums of money have been expended in permanent works, prospecting the mines, and erecting machinery. Machinery to the value of about £19,500 has been erected. The value of machinery in course of erection at the present time—and the greater portion of which is landed here—and machinery ordered is estimated at £14,800, and negotiations are pending for other machinery which will cost, say, £6,500. This will be a sufficient explanation to show why such a large amount of capital has been called up. The natural inference of course is that, with all this additional machinery, the yield of gold will be largely increased, as will also the number of dividend-paying claims; and I trust, for the sake of all concerned, that this may be correct. During the year fifty-three gold-mining leases, containing an area of 1,139 acres and 11 perches, bearing an annual rental of £1,165, have been executed. In addition to these there were, on the 31st March last, forty-eight leases awaiting execution. These leases contain 773 acres and 36 perches, at a rental of £804 per annum. Then there are forty-seven certificates of occupation, containing 704 acres 1 rood 16 perches, bearing an annual rental of £728.

I have once more the pleasure to record an increase in the revenue, that of the Warden's department being £5,267 9s. 7d., or an increase of £2,078 3s. 8d. on last year. The sittings of the Courts have been regularly held, and there has been an increase in the business. The following detailed statement will show the revenue collected and business transacted:—

Return of miners' rights, &c., issued during the year ended 31st March, 1883: Miners' rights, 465; business licenses (£5), 20; business licenses (£3), 131; water-race licenses (5s.), 2; water-race licenses (2s. 6d.), 157; registrations (10s.), 11; registrations (1s.), 354; mining applications, 368; applications for gold-mining leases, 165; applications for special claims, 19; gold-mining leases granted, 172.

Revenue: Warden's department, £5,267 9s. 7d.; Resident Magistrate's department, £194 12s.; local Land Office department, £776 3s. 7d.

Return of cases: Civil, 484; criminal, 130; Warden's, 20.

I estimate the population as follows: Reefton, 1,100 Europeans, 50 Chinese; Murray Creek, Black's Point, and Crushington, 560 Europeans; Boatman's, Italians, Due North, Redman's Landing, and Cronadun, 600 Europeans, 180 Chinese; Maori Gully, Devil's Creek, Slab Hut, and Merrygigs, 100 Europeans, 258 Chinese: total, 2,360 Europeans, 488 Chinese.

The district has generally been free from any serious crime, but the indiscriminate granting of spirit licenses in some of the licensing districts in the Inangahua and Buller Counties has not been beneficial to the community. Some of the licensees and the premises licensed are unsuited and unfit to be licensed, and accommodation licenses are being granted in direct contravention of the Licensing Act; whilst sly grog-selling rides rampant and apparently unnoticed, demanding some amendment in the present Act, as well as more active employment of police or revenue detectives to enforce the provisions of the Act.

I have, &c.,

W. H. REVELL,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

WESTLAND GOLD FIELDS.

(Including part of Nelson South-West Mining District.)

No. 10.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Greymouth, 19th April, 1883.

I have the honour to report as follows upon the portion of the gold field under my charge:—

Barry Town.—A large number of miners have left Barry Town since the date of my last report, many of them having gone to Rimu "rush." Most of the claims have been worked out and abandoned by the original shareholders, and some of the claims have been taken up again by other parties, who are now getting gold on a higher level than the original shareholders worked. Three parties are bringing in water-races, at considerable expense, with a view to working old and abandoned ground by means of sluicing. There are at present about forty miners on the field, working within a mile of the township. Between Cobden and Razorback, working on the beach and terraces (exclusive of Barry Town), there are about one hundred and twenty miners employed, most of whom are making fair wages. The track from Cobden to Seven-Mile Creek is nearly completed, and will be a great improvement upon the beach road, and a benefit to the inhabitants of Barry Town and others.

Brunnerton.—No discovery of any magnitude has been made during the past twelve months. Three new quartz-mining leases have been taken up. There are about ten men employed on and about the quartz-mining claims, and some twenty hands working alluvial ground between Brunnerton and Langdon's, some of whom are doing pretty well.