

March, 1883. It is to be regretted that they exhibit a falling-off rather than an increase in mining enterprise, the prospects of the district at present being rather discouraging.

In the alluvial workings there are still a few, probably fifty, men earning a livelihood, and the remarks made in previous reports as to the desirability of a water-supply for sluicing purposes are still applicable to this as well as other branches of mining industry at Hindon.

Very little has been done during the year in the way of further testing the quartz reefs. The Gladstone Company have had something like 100 tons of stone crushed, yielding an average of 15 dwt. of gold to the ton. The Game-hen reef is again being prospected, but with what success has not yet transpired. The Zealandia Company's ground has also been further prospected, but no trial of the stone by crushing has been made during the year.

As a number of the gold-mining leaseholders are falling into arrears with their rents steps will shortly have to be taken, in terms of the recommendation of the Gold Fields Committee of last session, to cancel those leases that are more than twelve months in arrear. It has been deemed wise to defer taking action in that direction for a time, in order to give lessees every reasonable opportunity (taking into consideration the difficulties peculiar to the district) of testing the various lodes which, as yet, have never been thoroughly prospected. It should also be borne in mind that, so far, the yield of gold has never in any case been sufficient to cover working expenses.

I believe it would greatly benefit the district by setting at rest existing doubts as to the probable and ultimate value of the Hindon quartz lodes if they could be tested by boring. But to do this would be beyond the present means of the miners. As the solving of such doubts would materially assist in dealing with the lands now temporarily reserved for mining purposes, the question whether or not it would be advisable for the Government to assist the miners in the direction indicated may possibly be one worthy of consideration.

Settlement is slowly progressing, and the crops recently grown by the settlers have been of fair average quantity and quality. A number of workmen on the Deep Stream contract of the Strath-Taieri Railway are residing in the district just now, including whom, with settlers and miners, the population may be estimated at between two and three hundred persons.

I have, &c.,

J. P. MAITLAND,
Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 18.

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

SIR,—

Invercargill, 3rd May, 1883.

I have the honour to forward herewith the usual annual statistical returns for the Orepuki and Longwood Districts for the year ending the 31st March, 1883.

I have to report that at Orepuki eight coal leases have now been granted, averaging eighty acres. Three of these have been amalgamated into the Orepuki Coal and Shale Company, who have commenced clearing the ground for a tramway to connect their proposed works with the Orepuki Railway, now in course of construction. The Great Western, with two leases, have, I am informed, sent up men to sink a shaft on their ground. On the remaining three leases no work has as yet been done, the lessees preferring, I presume, to wait until the railway approaches nearer to completion, for until the completion of the railway the coal leases will be of no value.

At Roundhill the Chinese population has decreased from 500 last year to 400; these, I believe, are doing fairly well, and are likely to remain permanently, as may be judged from the fact that during the past year they have built a place of worship at Roundhill in connection with the Presbyterian Church, costing £170, towards which the Chinese subscribed £100, in addition to labour.

The want of water still continues to be the great cause of complaint at Roundhill, preventing the development of a considerable area of what is stated to be payable ground.

The water-race which was in course of construction by Messrs. Berndtson and Company, from which so much was expected, has been discontinued for want of the necessary capital.

Beyond this nothing worthy of remark has occurred in the district, mining matters in other respects remaining in absolutely the same position as at the date of my last report.

I have, &c.,

HENRY McCULLOCH,
Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 19.

Mr. H. A. GORDON, Manager of the Nelson Creek Water-race, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Nelson Creek, 7th May, 1883.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the transactions connected with the working of the Nelson Creek Water-race for the year ending the 31st March, 1883.

The amount received from sales of water during the year has been £2,237 6s. 3d., and the