

Large quantities of marble of various colours, both massive and stratified, can be seen throughout the journey across the range. In the Takaka Valley several saw-mills are actively engaged cutting timber for market.

After crossing the Motueka River, and passing down its beautiful valley of hop-gardens and farms, I remained in the township until the next day, when I continued my course overland to Nelson, and thence by steamer to Wellington, where I arrived late on the 7th March. At Motueka I was met by Mr. Hursthouse, M.H.R., who kindly accompanied me as far as Nelson.

I wish to record here that, notwithstanding the Collingwood Goldfield was one of the earliest made known, and that the district is perhaps the richest in the colony in mineral wealth—having large deposits of gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, coal, and other minerals within a radius of a few miles—the least assistance to its progress has been given by the State in the way of making roads or tracks; it has, in fact, hitherto been entirely neglected. A water-race at the mouth of the Kaituna, near to the “Bonny Doon,” would serve to open up about 1,500 acres of payable auriferous land. A road, also, from Collingwood to Karamea would have a beneficial effect in the encouragement of prospecting, and in discovering what has so long been a hidden and unknown portion of the country.

SOUTHLAND.

Riverton and Orepuki.—I left Wellington on my southern tour towards the end of March, and reached Invercargill on the 24th of that month. I started next morning for Riverton and Orepuki, but did not find it necessary to stay at the former township beyond a short time. At the latter place I visited ground where a great deal of sluicing had been done, considering the small amount of water-power available, and only at irregular periods, for the uses of gold-mining. I was told of several rich “finds” and “patches” of gold that had been secured in close proximity to Orepuki, and here I saw a striking instance of gold being found in quantity in and under rich alluvial agricultural soil of two to several feet in depth.

I visited the Orepuki Coal Company’s works, about one and a half miles from the railway-station, and which had been winning coal a few weeks. The company have laid an excellent line of railway to their pit, and the works they have done for winning coal appear both substantial and suitable. They are working, below the surface 186 feet, a 10-foot seam, overlying which are 4ft. 6in. of apparently good laminated shale. The product of the pit, I am of opinion, is a fair quality of pitch coal. The mine is kept dry by pumping the water by steam-power into the Taunoa Creek, adjacent to the pit.

Roundhill.—On my return journey the same day by train to Invercargill I stopped at Colac Bay, and, horses not being available, walked on a corduroy track for four miles to Roundhill Diggings, in order that I might have an opportunity of conversing with the miners and acquainting myself with the wants and prospects of the district. There, too, is gold being found, in fair quantities, under very rich heavily timbered alluvial soil. The great drawback to a more rapid development of the gold-mining industry in the district is a scarcity of water-power for sluicing purposes, and tracks sufficiently passable to enable the citizens of the mines to move about and carry on their daily toils, their energetic discoveries, their developments in the wilderness, with some semblance of convenience and comfort. One enterprising miner here—and he is only an unit among the many hundreds which this colony can boast of in his class—named Berndtson, has been some years at work constructing, at his own expense, a race seventeen miles long, from an altitude of 400ft. above sea level. After many shifts and straits for ways and means, he has completed nine miles of his course, at a cost of £2,400; but he has yet eight miles to do, and, until the whole is finished, this great worker in the interests of pioneering and the mining industry must remain unrecouped and unpaid for the great business he has so long been engaged in. The race will cost other £2,400 to complete, and, as it will be the only one to command a sufficient height to be of use to a large mining community, it appears to me to be a case entitled to fair and liberal consideration.