

pected this work will be completed in about three months. The new block of stone is undoubtedly of very good quality, 1,652 tons crushed during the year having returned 3,704oz. of gold, valued at £14,807 9s., out of which £9,600 has been paid in dividends.

Golden Hill.—This claim is situated about one mile and a half from the Big River Claim. After prospecting for a short time stone was found, which has been driven on for about 180ft., although at a shallow level, the average thickness of the stone being about 18in. A winze is now being sunk on the stone. A track is being surveyed from the claim to the Big River Battery, where, I believe, a small crushing of stone will be had.

St. George.—Prospecting has been carried on for some time, with fair prospects, several outcrops of stone having been met with carrying gold. A tunnel 100ft. in length is now being driven to intersect the reef at a depth of about 50ft. from the surface.

MERRIJIGS.

Cumberland.—Stone was driven on for a distance of 250ft., and has been stoped out from No. 1 level to the surface. The work of opening No. 2 level was then commenced, and a tunnel was driven 350ft. north, but not striking the reef, a rise was put up to No. 1 level and an intermediate level west of the winze was opened out at a depth of 30ft. from No. 1 level. Stone has been driven on in this intermediate level for 90ft., the reef averaging a width of 3ft. 6in. A tunnel has been driven on this level 120ft. east from the winze, and a reef was intersected, from which stone is now being taken. The company has erected a fifteen-head battery, which is driven by steam, and connected with the mine by means of an aerial tramway. During the year 3,021 tons of stone have been crushed, yielding 2,808oz. gold, value £11,373, out of which £3,000 has been given in dividends. A cross-cut to the west has been driven over 200ft. on the bottom level.

Sir Francis Drake.—This claim was taken up between four and five years ago. A large amount of work was done to prove the permanent character of the reef discovered on the surface, and the company erected a fifteen-head battery, which has proved of great service to that portion of the district. The gold was found to be very fine, the ordinary appliances not being sufficient to save it. In the hope of the stone proving of better quality at a lower level, a shaft during the last six months has been sunk to a depth of 230ft., the work being performed by manual labour. A winding-engine is now in course of erection, and on its completion the work of driving for the reef will be commenced, which it is expected will be reached in about 300ft. A winze has been sunk on the stone to a depth of 190ft.

Golden Lead.—The erection of the battery being completed crushing was commenced, but it was found that it would not pay to put the whole body of stuff (sandstone intermixed with quartz veins) through; attention was therefore directed to some quartz leaders, which, on the level, carried a fair quantity of gold, but got poorer towards the surface. A large amount of work and prospecting has been done on the level. A tunnel has been driven 400ft. to open a new level at a depth of 60ft. below the present workings. The ground is very wet, rendering sinking impossible without the aid of pumping machinery; the workings, however, being at a high elevation, drainage can be effected by tunnelling at a low level. Should this company be successful in making the ground pay it would be the means of opening up a large district.

Inkerman.—The main shaft has been sunk to a depth of 338ft. from the surface; at 318ft. a chamber was cut out. After driving 72ft. north-east from the chamber the reef was struck. This was driven on 30ft. south and 50ft. north when the reef pinched out. A rise was put up 52ft. from No. 3 level to connect with the winze sunk from No. 2 level. An intermediate level was opened 45ft. down the winze, the stone averaging about 3ft. in width. In the intermediate level the stone was driven on 62ft. south, and 45ft. north, at 24ft. higher level, and the stone stoped up to No. 2 level. A winze was sunk 58ft. below No. 3 level, the stone being small and in blocks. A considerable amount of prospecting has been done. In the Lady Louisa, or Eastern Mine, a rise was put up 102ft., and a tunnel driven 100ft. in length from the top of the rise. The reef is 8ft. wide, but of poor quality, averaging only about 4½dwt. per ton.

GENERAL.

A large amount of work has been done in a number of other claims in various parts of the district, which, however, I have not specially mentioned, nothing worthy of note having occurred in them. The calls for the year have been very heavy, and being borne to a very large extent by the people of the district, but little capital coming into the place, has had a marked effect; and so much has the prevailing depression been felt, that in a number of cases much difficulty was experienced in getting in calls sufficient to pay the rent on some holdings. During the year the Mining Registrar applied for the cancellation of fifty-four leases and licensed holdings for non-payment of rent. The hearing of some of these was adjourned from time to time in order to give the holders every opportunity of paying the rent, with the result that a considerable number paid, thirty-one leases and licensed holdings being cancelled.

In conclusion, I have to thank managers of companies and others for information kindly supplied.

I have, &c.,

JACKSON KEDDELL, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 9.

Mr. N. D. COCHRANE, Inspector of Mines, to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Office of Inspector of Mines, Westport, 31st March, 1892.

I have the honour to report as follows on the gold-mines in the Marlborough, Nelson, and Westland Districts:—