

ACCIDENTS.

The following accidents occurred in sluicing claims during 1891-92. None of them were notified to me, and would therefore not appear if I had not heard of them unofficially:—

1. Fillipo Pantina was struck by a fall in his claim, near Waimea, on the 11th February, 1891, and received injuries, from which he died on the 14th February.
2. David Dixon, when lowering blocks for his claim, at Kumara, on the 13th February, 1891, had his leg broken by one of the runaway blocks, through the rope breaking.
3. Joseph Connolly, working in a claim at Kumara, was struck on the ankle, on the 14th February, 1891, by a falling piece of pug, which so injured his leg that it had to be amputated.
4. Joseph Kennedy was killed by a large surface-slip in his claim, Upper Blackball, on the 23rd October.
5. Patrick Donovan was killed in his claim, at Croninville, on the 18th December. He had crawled under a recent fall of the blue reef to recover a pick when it came away further, and crushed him.

I have, &c.,

N. D. COCHRANE,
Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 10.

Mr. Warden KEDDELL to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Greymouth, 19th May, 1892.

I have the honour to forward the usual statistical information required by the department for the past year ending the 31st March, 1892, and to furnish the following general report of mining matters for the same period in the district under my supervision. I forward the returns and report relating to the Inangahua district separately.

There has been no noteworthy occurrence in the Greymouth district during the year, and I much regret to say that I am not able to refer with satisfaction to any of the new ventures mentioned in my last report. The stagnation which is so universally complained of in all branches of commerce and industry throughout the district seems to have extended to mining. Whatever has been undertaken during the year has been originated and supported by local funds only, and the few capitalists are very shy of mining ventures of late. I have reason to believe, however, that, though I have no brilliant instances of success to chronicle, the yield of gold has remained about the same.

Blackball.—The Minerva Company has to ascertain extent justified the anticipations of its promoters. Their ten-stamper battery has been erected at great cost and trouble, being removed from Ross to the claim, which is situated about seven miles up the Blackball Creek, over a very rough track from Blackball Ferry, and crushing has been continued with very fair results, interrupted for some little time in consequence of a heavy fall of earth, the machine-house having a very narrow escape. The reef they are at present crushing from is of very great thickness, and the gold well distributed, so that all of it is believed to be payable for crushing, but the returns are small. The company relies chiefly on the reef which they hope to find across the creek, and to reach which they are putting in a tunnel of 156ft. This will be through in about two or three months, and if the reef keeps its present size, and the gold is equal to the prospects obtained in the winze they have sunk, the Minerva Company will prove the best investment in mines in the colony. The manager and shareholders are confident of success, and so far everything looks well. On their good or bad fortune depends the fate of another claim recently taken up on adjacent ground, and the issue is of importance to the mining community, since, if successful, public attention will be attracted to a portion of the district which has always been a land of promise to the miners, and has only been neglected from the difficulties attending occupation of it, the chief obstacle being the want of roads. Transport of every kind of machinery is well nigh impossible, and can only be effected by pack-horses, either from Brunnerton, or from the Midland Railway at Ngahere across the Grey River by the ferry. This is felt to be the greatest drawback to the development of some new ground taken up during the past year up the right- and left-hand branches of the Blackball. The land is covered with huge boulders, and these can only be disposed of by powerful machinery such as hydraulic cranes, &c.; under present circumstances it is impossible to place such in position.

Moonlight.—Heavy nuggets are still occasionally found in Garden Gully, and the special claims and other holdings which were taken up last year have been doing a great deal of dead-work, tunnel tail-races, &c., by means of which the holders hope to discover the lost lead, which is supposed to contain rich deposits of this class of gold.

In the Waipuna Riding, at Orwell Creek, Noble's, Duffers', Half-ounce, and Mosquito Creek, about 150 men find steady employment on the old workings, as they have with little change for years past.

At *Duffers'*, a company has been floated to work land at Duffers' Creek on a large scale. They propose to bring on a larger quantity of water than would be within the means of any ordinary party of miners. The company was incorporated last September, and it has acquired an amalgamated claim of 30 acres. The object of the company is the working of the deep ground in Duffers', which is believed to be highly auriferous, and which has been left unworked because sufficient fall could not be obtained. The company has purchased some five miles of water-races, with the rights, and these are concentrated in a head-race about one mile in length, running partly through a substantial fluming, and a considerable length of tunnel; this will supply the necessary water for their elevators and washing the dirt. A drainage-tunnel of 34 chains will drain the ground; this, with other works in progress, will be completed in about three months' time, and the claim then should be in full working-order. As the ground has been thoroughly prospected, and found payable so far as the