

phical knowledge of the great central chain. About a couple of months ago Mr. Pringle and another crossed over the Godley Glacier, and came down the Wataroa River, on the western slope, to the Main South Road, about nine miles from the sea, in three days, returning in the same time. Very few difficulties were experienced on the journey. To the south of Mount Cook Mr. C. E. Douglas has been engaged in exploring the Copland and other branches of the Karangarua River, for a tourist track through to the Hermitage. All that is at present known of his doings is that he has seen, between La Perouse and Cook, the most magnificent scenery in New Zealand. It is to be hoped he will find a pass through which a tourist-track can be constructed to the Hermitage.

*Jackson's Bay Sub-district.*

There is nothing of note to report in this district. The usual number of men find a living on the beaches and the Bullock Creek and Blue River Ranges. The country south of the Cascade River, which will shortly be opened up and made more easily accessible to miners by the road now being constructed to Barn Bay, connecting with the Main South Road, presents features of great promise. On the western watershed of the Hope Range, covering a large area, which is again overlain by a sheet of morainic drift, we have the auriferous drifts, resting near the sea on a blue-pug bottom, containing mussel and other shells, and further back in the range on a soft slate, dipping at a high angle to the west, and again on the Maitai slates and sandstones, out of which the pug on which the drifts rest lower down has been ground out. Through this formation several large streams have cut their way to the sea—notably Callery's and the Fork and Spoon Creeks, which both discharge on what is known as Brown's Refuge Beach. In Callery and the Fork and Spoon there is a clearly-defined section of the overlying formation shown, and from the sea to their source they contain gold and awaruite. In the wash underlying the morainic covering gold can be got in every dish from top to bottom. Water is plentiful, and easily obtainable; and this promising sluicing-ground is practically untouched. All that has been done in the way of mining has been by beach-combers, who have occasionally made rises on this beach when travelling up and down the coast. The Gorge River, and the Hacket to the south of this, and the ranges towards Big Bay, are all gold-bearing; and, taking into consideration the rising importance of nickel in its connection with the manufacture of steel, and its various other economic uses, the awaruite deposits found in this neighbourhood may very soon command more than a passing notice. The completion of the road opening up this block will do away with the necessity for boating, by which so many lives have been lost. The only other matter calling for attention is the unfinished state of the Main South Road, establishing through communication with the head of Lake Wakatipu, and the Haast Pass Track to Otago. Horses and cattle can be taken over this road, but not over the other. His Excellency the Governor and the Hon. the Minister of Mines and Public Works travelled down the coast and over the Haast Pass in January. Since that date many of the tracks have become almost impassable, and the approaches to the river in many places are extremely dangerous. The discharge of all the ferrymen and roadmen has rendered travelling in the south all but impossible. It is to be hoped the County Council will see their way to reinstate them, otherwise loss of life, besides inconvenience, is sure to result from their suspension. There are five miners at Big Bay said to be earning small wages.

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The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

D. MACFARLANE, Warden.

No. 12.

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

SIR,—

Oamaru, 26th April, 1892.

I have the honour to forward herewith the statistical returns, also summary of business done and revenue, and to report upon the district under my charge, for the year ending the 31st of March, 1892.

During the past year there has not been any marked advance in this field as a mining centre, but the proclamation of the Maerewhenua River as a tailings- and *débris*-channel has removed a great obstacle to enterprise. It has relieved the minds of the claimholders as to the permanency of their holdings, and will lead to the introduction of a much larger water-supply, so beneficial to the progress of the shallow alluvial workings, and without which neither increase nor permanency of population can be maintained.

The families, who are for the most part old residents are comfortably settled, and divide their time between mining, grazing, and farming. The unmarried men are somewhat nomadic in their habits—mining for a portion of the year, and during certain seasons following labouring, harvesting, and other pursuits. The Maerewhenua may be properly termed a poor man's diggings, the average return per man not exceeding £1 10s. a week.

The claims are generally extended-sluicing, and worked by parties of two, three, or four men at most. On the east side of the river are only a very few claims in full swing, to be accounted for by the scarcity of water, and owing to a heavy disastrous flood in February last, which caused incalculable damage to the head-races, which are flumed and cut through very steep sidelings. Notwithstanding these checks, now that the Maerewhenua is a sludge-channel the miners are cheerfully hopeful for the future of the field.

The roads formed in this district by the Government last summer are of little benefit to the miners, but they have opened up some valuable land for settlement. The road, when completed, to Kyeburn will facilitate communication between Maniatoto, Naseby, and the sea-board. The great obstacle to goldmining having been removed by the Maerewhenua River being declared a channel for the deposit of tailings, the extent of sluicing-country and its gold-producing capabilities will be in a great measure dependent on the quantity of water that can be obtained from neighbouring streams, and the cost of bringing it on to the terraces. The probability of a water-supply in the