

The population of the districts mentioned below is estimated at 23,969, and is distributed as follows:—

	European.	Chinese.	Totals.
Lawrence Borough	997	...	997
Tuapeka District	2,086	200	2,286
Waipori	310	90	400
Waitahuna	1,100	50	1,150
Milton	4,000	30	4,030
Balclutha	4,300	...	4,300
Kaitangata	3,200	...	3,200
Tapanui	2,609	40	2,649
Clinton	1,499	1	1,500
Gore	2,000	7	2,007
Waikaia	1,360	90	1,450
Totals	23,461	508	23,969

No. 11.

Mr. Warden DALGLIESH to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Naseby, 2nd May, 1895.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual statistical returns of the mining industry for the Mount Ida District, and in doing so I beg to submit the following report for your information:—

Although the ordinary operations carried on do not present any strikingly new features, I have pleasure in reporting a very marked revival of activity during the latter months of the past year with regard to both quartz-mining and still more so dredging—as to the latter, on the Taieri River, from Strath Taieri upwards towards Hyde. Also, on the Manuherikia River, from Ophir upwards towards the Dunstan Creek and Blackstone Hill, quite a large number of claims have been applied for; some have been already granted, and active steps are being taken to work them. Suitable plant, I am informed, is being arranged for, and considerable animation displayed. No doubt this improvement is attributable in a great measure to the very brilliant success achieved by some of the dredging companies on the Clutha River, and, if the prospects on which the operations now contemplated in the localities I have named are borne out when worked on a large scale, then a period of still greater activity and prosperity may with certainty be anticipated in the immediate future throughout this district. Valuable improvements in dredging machinery are frequently being perfected and applied. From the information afforded me, I believe the most complete will now be obtained, and the various places will really get a fair trial. In former attempts, principally from the want of capital, it has been impossible to obtain really suitable plant, and, in many instances very inefficient machinery has been tried, with results disastrous to those immediately interested, and stamping similar undertakings with danger and instability; while, with more fitting appliances, there would be every probability of them proving successful, and an almost limitless source of profitable employment to vast numbers of industrious workers. In this, as in other descriptions of gold-mining, it is only by the application of thoroughly efficient and proved gold-saving appliances that success can be attained in these days of operating on ground difficult of access, or not carrying the large quantities of the precious metal which were so easily obtained in former years. There is little doubt, and the fact must not be lost sight of, that in many localities the auriferous strata and drifts are becoming more difficult to grapple with—getting deeper, and the necessary fall more perplexing to secure. At the same time there is no corresponding increase in the supply of water to counteract these disadvantages. Calculations as to profitable occupation of ground for mining have now to be based on largely increased quantities of material being treated.

The ordinary supply of water for sluicing purposes has on the whole been favourable, and as a result I am gratified to be able to report that the yield of gold shows a very substantial increase as compared with the estimated amount obtained during the previous year.

In quartz-mining, the feverish excitement displayed at both the West Coast and the Auckland fields has had the natural effect of again attracting increased attention to the auriferous lodes in this district. Quite a large number of areas have again been taken up as special claims, in which it is intended to introduce some of the latest and most improved machinery for crushing and gold-saving purposes. Where found suitable, I understand the cyanide process will be taken advantage of. Some of the contemplated works will be of considerable magnitude, necessitating the investment of much money, and, according to statements made by applicants, no difficulty is now anticipated in raising the necessary amounts. This will doubtless be beneficially felt throughout the district.

It has, I believe, been clearly demonstrated long ago—and in numerous particular localities within this district—that there are existing lodes of auriferous quartz (now practically lying dormant) which would prove highly remunerative as a settled investment of capital, if treated economically with modern appliances; even with the old-fashioned effete machinery, returns were