

Fortune, at Thames; Crown, Woodstock, and Victor-Waihou, at Karangahake; Waitekauri, Jubilee, Waitekauri Extended, and Komata Reefs, at Waitekauri; Waihi, Union Waihi, Waihi-Silverton, and Grand Junction, at Waihi.

There are also a number of other mines disposed of, but definite particulars have not reached me.

The outlook for next year is exceedingly hopeful. The new mills to be erected at Coromandel, Komata, Karangahake, Waitekauri, and Waihi may be expected to commence crushing in time for the results to swell the yield of gold. The Silverton new mill of forty stamps is already at work, and the results so far are up to expectations. The total number of stamps to be erected during 1896 will be about two hundred and fifty.

The statement attached will show the returns from mines compared with those of the past year, and it will be seen that there is a total increase of £116,360 in the value of the yield of gold, and that the number for men engaged in mining is more than doubled: Men employed—1895, 1,422; 1896, 3,482.

The population at Coromandel has received large additions, and numerous houses are being built in the town and surrounding district. At Thames, although the increase is not so marked, houses in the town are already scarce. Paeroa, which is the distributing-centre for Ohinemuri County, has grown to be a large town. Karangahake Township is also fully occupied, whilst both at Waitekauri and Waihi the areas of the present townships are found to be too confined, and their limits will have to be at once extended.

The increase of work, consequent on the demand for mining properties, has taxed the staff at all the offices to the utmost, and only through the energy and zeal displayed by all the officers, without exception, has the work been kept pace with. I believe that the year ending the 31st March, 1896, will mark an era in the gold-mining history of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.

H. EYRE KENNY, Warden.

### No. 3.

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

SIR,—

Blenheim, 7th May, 1896.

I have the honour to forward you herewith the usual annual returns of Marlborough goldfields.

Although the returns may show a slight decrease in number of men employed, I am of opinion that in a short time the number of men employed upon the goldfields in this district will be considerably increased. My report, of course, is only for the year ended the 31st March last. Up to that date there is nothing connected with any of the districts under my charge that requires special notice. A little more interest is now being taken in mining matters in this district. Applications for a few of the reefing claims formerly cancelled have been lodged, but it appears to me that most of these applications are simply for holdings to be held as speculations. I will now very briefly refer to some of the sub-districts under my charge.

In the Cullensville district there is no improvement to report. An attempt has been made to float a company to work the low-lying land known as Cullen's freehold, but at present nothing has been done. I do not know of any claim paying more than wages. In the various valleys, including Onamalutu on the north bank of the Wairau, about the same number of miners are at work, very few doing more than making bare wages.

In the Wakamarina district the Gorge Company, working a river claim, have succeeded, by dams and other protective works and by pumping, in clearing their 1,000ft. of river claim of water; they are now engaged sinking a shaft through the shingle forming the river-bed. They have not bottomed; therefore the results of their labour is at present uncertain. A few licensed holdings (reefing claims) have been applied for in this district, but no work has yet been done by the applicants on any of them. The one or two parties who have held reefing claims in this district have either ceased work or have existed by means of "protection orders."

It seems strange that the statements should have to be annually made that the Marlborough goldfield is as rich as any in New Zealand. That we have miles of reefing country intersected by valleys, the deposits in the beds of the streams flowing down these valleys clearly indicating that payable quartz reefs are to be found. These are, I believe, statements of facts; yet what is the results: simply that, if we are to be governed in our judgment by facts concerning mining in other colonies and countries, the decision must be that there has been no real mining carried on in Marlborough up to the present time, and that a district that ought to produce a large revenue, and provide work for a large number of men, is utterly neglected.

Before closing I may mention that arrangements have been made by a Wellington company to work the Ravenscliff property on tribute. The tributers are only just commencing work.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.

J. ALLEN, Warden.

### No. 4.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Nelson, 14th May, 1896.

I have the honour to report upon, and to forward herewith, the usual statistical returns, for the year ended the 31st March last, for the Mount Arthur Table-land and Wangapeka portions of the Karamea mining district.