

No. 4.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Blenheim, 9th May, 1898.

I have the honour to enclose you herewith my annual return for the Marlborough Mining District for the year ended the 31st March, 1898.

I have no special report to make concerning this district for the past year. A number of special, river, and terrace claims have been applied for during the past year, but, as most of these applications were not dealt with till nearly the end of the year, no work has been done on them. I am informed that some of the applicants intend to work their claims; therefore I hope to have a more satisfactory report to make at the termination of the present year.

Payable stone has been found in several places in this district, and experts from other districts have not hesitated to say that if such discoveries had been made in any other gold-mining district they would have been worked long ago.

Dr. McKenzie, who owns a very small dredge on the Wakamarina River, has succeeded in bringing payable gold to the surface. This, no doubt, has induced a few workers and many syndicators to put in applications for river claims.

I do not think that the question of the future welfare of a mining district should be decided by the presence or absence of applications for claims. My opinion of the value of this district has been formed long ago, and I see no reason to alter that opinion. There is no doubt that this is a district rich in minerals, and if the miners are not driven out of the district by the alienation of known auriferous country a discovery will, sooner or later, be made that will tend to bring a working population of miners and mining companies into this district.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

J. ALLEN, Warden.

No. 5.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Nelson, 4th May, 1898.

I have the honour to forward herewith the returns for the year ended the 31st March last, for each of the sub-districts of that portion of the Karamea Mining District within my jurisdiction, and to report generally thereon:—

NELSON.

The track from the Wangapeka-Karamea Saddle to the Crow River was hardly completed in time to produce any marked results this year; but now that facilities have been provided for getting on to the ground many may be expected to visit the locality early next spring who have previously found payable gold in the Crow River.

I have not heard that any fresh finds have been made in the neighbourhood of the Sherry, the Wangapeka, or the Baton. At the Sherry two water-races are in course of construction, and about a dozen men are said to be working on McRae's Run, Wangapeka, with fairly satisfactory results, but as yet there is no sluicing on a large scale commenced. Altogether about thirty miners find employment in this sub-district.

MOTUEKA.

During the past year all the applications for special claims, representing an area of 700 acres, in the Mount Arthur district, which were referred to in my last report, have lapsed. As far as I am able to judge, they were taken up without due investigation on the part of persons interested, though doubtless in the near future means will be found of working this known auriferous country to greater advantage than it is being worked at present by the few miners engaged.

The mineral licenses referred to in my last report were granted for an area of 300 acres, for the purpose of working the asbestos deposits in the Upper Takaka Valley, in the vicinity of Mount Arthur. A strong company has been formed, who are about taking over the licenses, and already tenders are called for surveying a tramway-line from the deposits to ultimately connect with the tramway-line down the valley to the port at Waitapu; and I hear that a track is being, or is about to be, cut to connect with the Mount Arthur Track, and so obtain comparatively easy communication with Motueka and Nelson. I have obtained fine specimens of asbestos from the deposits. The quality is undoubtedly good, and the quantity is said to be assured.

TAKAKA.

At the Bubu there are five parties working. Patterson and party are bringing up a tail-race, and expect when they reach their ground to get on to good gold. Whelan and party have a sluicing claim, which I understand pays well when they have water. Rose and party are also sluicing, but have to get protection during the summer months on account of the scarcity of water. Stewart and party were on good gold at the time a slip occurred and destroyed their workings and covered up their face. Cate and Son are said to be making small wages. The general impression about this locality appears to be that the ground is good enough to support a number of men, but water is scarce, and the workings consequently retarded.

At the Anatoki there are six or seven parties working in the bed of the river, but with poor results. Here, again, the difficulty of bringing water on to the ground prevents the terraces being sluiced.

At the Onakaka six licensed holdings have been applied for to work a mineral deposit thought to contain platinum, but samples submitted to the Government Analyst have not confirmed expectations.