

COLLINGWOOD.

Generally speaking, the mining outlook in this sub-district is still satisfactory, and much good work is being done, with successful results in some cases, and in others—which have not yet arrived at a paying stage—with considerable confidence of success in the future.

Since the 1st April, 1897, nine special claims and licensed holdings have been granted and taken up, making up a total of twenty-nine now held, embracing an area of 1,470 acres 2 roods 11 perches, besides which there are two coal leases, containing an area of 139 acres.

The Parapara Hydraulic Sluicing and Mining Company have during the last year been continuously mining on a reserve held by them and on Mr. Travers's private land—in one place with two nozzles playing on an open face, and in another with two elevators. An average of about fifteen men have been employed during the year, and good returns of gold are said to have been obtained.

The Collingwood Goldfields Company (Limited), which has taken over Messrs. Fell and Gilmer's leases at the Quartz Ranges and Golden Gully, has about fifty men employed. This company has erected a sawmill, and is cutting the timber for fluming the water from the Boulder Lake to the Quartz Range Claims. The timber will be taken to the commencement of the race on the tram-line (already constructed), a distance of four miles. Practically all the alluvial ground at the Quartz Ranges, which experts have pronounced payable throughout, is held by this company, which to all appearance has a successful future before it.

The Rocky River Hydraulic Sluicing Company completed bringing on the water to their claim at Rocky River, and have commenced sluicing. No returns are as yet to hand, but it is generally believed that the venture will prove successful.

The Johnston's United Mining Company is still at a standstill. Unfortunately, a bush-fire spread to and destroyed the company's battery and plant in February last.

A good deal of work has been done on the licensed holding held by Squire and Bray during the last year. The result so far has been somewhat discouraging, but Mr. Squire is still sanguine that he will yet obtain a good return for the capital expended.

Of the five dredging claims granted during the year, only two have been taken up; these are on the Aorere River. It is early yet to say what the present holders will do, but I think it is unlikely that the rich deposits the Aorere River is known to contain will remain much longer neglected.

The Taitapu Estates Company, together with the Pioneers of New Zealand and the Australian Gold Trust Company, have given employment to about a hundred men throughout the year on the Taitapu Estates at West Wanganui. The valuable battery imported last year by the Taitapu Estates Company has been got on to the ground, is erected, and crushing has commenced. The Pioneers of New Zealand, who have been prospecting on another part of the estate, have met with satisfactory results. From 20 weighed tons of unpicked stone crushed at the new Taitapu battery 65 oz. of retorted gold were obtained.

Messrs. Caldwell and Son are steadily working their coal lease at Pakawau, where they have a good seam of coal. Their output for the past year was 230 tons, but this will be greatly increased as soon as the lessees have put down a tram-line, now about to be constructed from the mine to the wharf.

There has again been a decrease in the number of miners' rights issued and applications made during the past year, but this, as I explained last year, must not be taken to indicate a decrease in mining, but rather that the miners are electing to work for the steady wages paid by the large companies in preference to working in small parties as heretofore with precarious results.

In conclusion, it is gratifying to be able to repeat what I said last year—viz., that the Collingwood district is practically free from unemployed, and that the ordinary population, as well as a large number of strangers, have found ample employment here during the year.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

WILSON HEAPS, Warden.

No. 6.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Westport, 13th April, 1898.

I beg to submit the following report upon that portion of the Karamea Mining District which is included within my jurisdiction:—

WESTPORT.

The year just closed has witnessed a decided relapse from the excitement and activity that had existed for some time previously, and, as a consequence, most of the large mining areas then taken up have been forfeited or abandoned, the licensees having failed to comply with the conditions imposed. Very little prospecting is being done now in comparison with the energy displayed in this direction twelve or eighteen months ago.

A few mines are proceeding slowly but steadily with preparatory works. The General Exploration Company is employing a reduced number of men, both at Fairdown and Bendigo, and some time must yet elapse before gold is obtained in appreciable quantities.

The Britannia Company has been prospecting vigorously throughout the year, and has found payable stone in various parts of the mine. Some work has been done at the Great Republic Mine, Stony Creek, and crushing ought to be started at an early date.

About the only claim at Mokihinui upon which anything has been done during the past year is the Lady Agnes. A few men have been employed prospecting, and, so far as I can learn, they have not met with the success anticipated.

No further developments have resulted at Karamea, Oparara, and Cascade Creek, and none of the large areas recently taken up in these localities are being worked.