

James Main and Party, Kanieri.—Several visits were made to this claim during the year, but on each occasion the mine was shut down and the employés absent. On the 13th November a miner named Stewart was partially buried by a flush of loose sand and gravel in the face. The Assistant Inspector, being in the locality, took full charge of necessary operations, and after five hours' work Stewart was rescued, with slight injuries only.

ROSS.

Donnelly's Creek Drainage-race.—Operations on this drainage-race have ceased.

Ross United.—The yield of gold for the year was 212 oz. 6 dwt. 16 gr., with a cash value of £806 4s. 6d. The property continues to be worked on tribute by ten men.

Mont d'Or (Charles Davey, mine-manager).—As a *bona fide* hydraulic-sluicing concern, the company have the satisfaction to know that the plant and all material necessary to make the working of the claim a success are kept in good order, the only drawback being scarcity of water. During the year the yield of gold was 1,361 oz. 8 dwt., valued at £5,306 12s. Twenty-nine men employed.

Prince of Wales.—A dredge is under construction to work this claim.

WAIHO.

Waiho Hydraulic Sluicing Company (Mr. Nicholas, mine-manager).—The manager has received instructions from his directors to make a survey and estimate of cost to bring the water to the most practicable position on the claim, in view of further extending operations. Five men employed.

Duffer's Creek.—Three Europeans and one Chinese are working on this creek. Several dredging claims are taken up, and four men are employed by an Otago syndicate to prospect the creek bed and flats. Three miners have lately opened out a sluicing claim at Lake Ianthe.

McArthur and Party, Waitaroa.—This party obtain very favourable results from their sluicing claim. The want of a pack-track round the Gorge Bluff is very much felt.

Wataroa.—About four miles up the Wataroa River three men are bringing in water to work the river-beach, which is considered payable from recent prospects.

ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES.

Humphrey's Gully Water-race.—(19/10/1900): John Watson, a contractor, was killed whilst rolling a large root over the terrace.

Dredging Accidents.

Greenstone Junction.—(5/10/1900): John Lawson (not an employé) fell overboard into the stream, and was drowned.

Consolidated, Three-channel Flat.—Darcy Inwood, engine-driver, had his third finger on right hand crushed at first joint while placing his hand on air-pump bearing to feel if it was hot.

DREDGING.

Dredging, as a legitimate and practical gold-mining industry, has not reaped the rich harvest of success which non-practical and unscrupulous speculators so confidently predicted at the commencement of the boom. Fortunately, failure cannot be attributed to any defect in the auriferous or other natural conditions of the West Coast river-bed and beach-flat deposits, for they are prepared to yield the hidden treasures which they undoubtedly contain, provided the most advanced scientific and mechanical appliances are skilfully applied to unearth and save the precious metal.

Needless to say, success and economy in dredge-building have not received that solid consideration from our engineers which we anticipated, and which the importance of the subject demands; for, in studying the mechanical and gold-saving appliances of our most modern and up-to-date dredges afloat, they cannot be considered capable of effectively coping with the heavy and deep character of the ground, and of saving efficiently the fine gold common in our submerged alluvial deposits. As a consequence of these conditions, frequent stoppages from breakage and alterations of machinery, and leakage of pontoons, interfere seriously with the progress of the industry. Even in the case of dredges that are paying their way, the gold yield might be much enhanced if proper steps were taken to remedy the defects referred to.

The first principle of success, however, and one that should enable the engineer to base his calculations on a sounder and more practical footing, is the carrying-out of a more thorough and efficient system of prospecting preparatory to designing a dredge. Should this system be effectively pursued on honest reliable lines, the progress of the industry will be enhanced and more satisfactory results obtained.

Considering the immense wealth imbedded in the highly auriferous black-sand and other deposits within easy access, this important factor of wealth does not appear to receive the careful attention which we would naturally expect. Judging from the lucrative earnings won by the beach-combers by the most primitive system of gold-saving, and in many cases with scarcity of water, modern dredges of less lifting and more gold-saving capacity ought to effectively cope with these deposits at a minimum expenditure both in construction and maintenance.