

*Ourawera Gold-mining Company* (James Coulling, Mine-manager).—Hydraulic sluicing and elevating: Good results have been obtained for the year's work, and dividends are declared regularly.

*Orepuki Goldfields.*

Gold-mining continues to employ practically the same number of men as for several years past.

As the claims in the immediate neighbourhood of the township are becoming worked out the attention of the miners is being diverted in the direction of Pahia and Round Hill. The surface of the country is heavily overgrown by forest, which renders prospecting more or less difficult, but as the limited supply of water becomes available the auriferous nature of the alluvial surface is becoming gradually recognised. It is to be noted that gold to the value of 1,000 oz. per acre has been recovered on this field.

*Beach-combing.*—Sea-beach claims have proved more than usually remunerative during the last year.

*Waiau River.*

Several small sluicing claims have been maintained on the river-terraces lying to the west of the Waiau River mouth. Small prospecting parties have ventured from time to time further west, but the difficulties of travelling and working in dense bush, together with the intermittent nature of food-supplies, have militated against success.

Two men reported the discovery of a rich quartz reef in the bush, but proved themselves unable to locate the reef on a second attempt.

*Stewart Island.*

*Treseder and Goodger, McFadyen's Creek, Pegasus.*—Ground-sluicing for tin and gold in the old creek-bed in the terraces.

*Fraser and Ford, Pegasus.*—Ground-sluicing for tin and gold in the terraces of a branch of McArthur's Creek.

*Preservation Inlet and South-west Coast of Otago.*

A few parties are engaged ground-sluicing upon the mainland and on Coal Island, with varying results.

ACCIDENTS.

HYDRAULIC AND ALLUVIAL MINES.

*Fatal.*

6/4/1904.—Joseph Walker, fossicker, Waitahuna, was found buried under a fall of earth in his claim.

12/4/1904.—John Lütgens, miner, Norwegian Claim, Waitahuna Gully, was killed by premature explosion of powder while stemming a charge with an iron scraper as tamping-bar.

11/6/1904.—Lye Mow, miner, Fitzmaurice and Smith's Sluicing Claim, Round Hill, was killed by fall of earth from side of tail-race.

24/9/1904.—George Taylor and Andrew McNab, miners, Roxburgh Amalgamated Sluicing and Mining Company's Claim, Roxburgh, were killed by a fall of rock while assisting to repair a break in the water-race.

*Non-fatal.*

12/4/1904.—John Larsen, miner, Norwegian Claim, Waitahuna Gully, was severely burnt about the face by premature explosion of powder while stemming a charge with an iron scraper as tamping-bar.

22/10/1904.—John Mellor, nozzle-man, Undaunted Gold-mining Company's Claim, Matakaniui, sustained fracture of two ribs by fall of clay from the face.

22/10/1904.—William Kenny, sluicer, Scandinavian Water-race Company's Claim, St. Bathans, while inserting scrub behind the elevator uptake pipes, fell a distance of 20 ft. into the elevator well-hole, and sustained fracture of two ribs.

GOLD-DREDGING.

At the end of December, 1903, the total number of dredges in Otago and Southland was 200. At the end of December, 1904, this number had dropped to 184. During the year there was a decrease of 6 working dredges in Otago, and an increase of 3 working dredges in Southland. The total number of dredges in Otago was lessened by 13. Of this number, 10 were dismantled and not re-erected. One was removed to the West Coast, 1 to Victoria, and another to Southland. In Southland 2 dredges were dismantled and not re-erected. On account of the number of dredges for sale the building of new dredges in the Otago and Southland Districts has been at a complete standstill. A number of registered companies which had been in operation part of the year were liquidated, and, in some cases, the dredges were started to work again by new companies. In other cases the dredges were dismantled after sale and not re-erected, or were sold for removal to other claims.

Improvements in dredges have been of a minor nature, chiefly relating to improvements in general practice. An appliance to prevent the loss of the buckets and links in case of the pins breaking has been patented by Mr. C. L. Watt, consulting engineer, Dunedin. O'Brien's application of hydraulic power to dredges has proved successful in districts where water is available under sufficient pressure, and modifications of the application of this system are being adopted. Johnson's submerged-jet principle of dredging, or, rather, elevating, was tried and proved capable of practical results, but has not been in operation throughout the year.