

a private concern, the returns are not published. This claim is undoubtedly a good one, and has a long lease of life before it. About 2,000 ft. of new 15 in. piping is now ready on the ground to be added to the present plant, and when in position will greatly increase the working-power. The water-right is one of the best in Otago, and the locality is such that little inconvenience arises from climatic conditions.

Messrs. Johnston Bros., at the Old Caledonia Gully claim, have been adding to their hydraulic plant during the year to reach the deeper levels. The gold-returns for the year have also been higher than previously, and the owners are well satisfied with their property. A high-level race is the only disadvantage; but it is intended to bring in more water from the Taieri side of the range, and afterwards the loss of time will not be so great.

McLean and party are sparing no expense on their new race. This is a heavy undertaking for a small party, and it is hoped that when completed they will meet with the success their energies merit.

Messrs. Cambridge and Wilson have suffered for want of water this season. The scarcity of snow in the earlier part of the year, before the heavy frost set in, put a limit to their operations, nevertheless the ground turned over gave satisfactory remuneration.

At the Serpentine the mild winter enabled an early start to be made in the spring, and several of the miners here are reported to be doing well. A couple more hydraulic elevating plants are to be in full swing shortly, and expectations are high.

At Hamilton's a number of men always make a livelihood, but the methods are still too primitive, otherwise the gold-yield would be much higher. Hamilton's has yet a brilliant future before it. There are still thousands of ounces in the "Old Hill," and it only wants all the water-supplies converted into one body and the united forces brought to bear on one spot when the difficulties now lying in the way would vanish.

OPHIR AND IDA VALLEY.

A small syndicate, composed chiefly of working-men, has purchased a dredge sold in liquidation cheaply, dismantled and removed it to Black's Flat, where it will soon be at work. I understand the ground was prospected in the first instance, and found to give satisfactory results, and it is to be hoped that this venture will turn out well.

The *Cairnrodlie dredge*, Ida Valley, is keeping well at work, and evidently the owners are satisfied with the yield of gold obtained; but as it is a private concern the gold-returns are not published.

The Government having purchased the Bonanza Water-race property, it is hoped the race will be extended to command the high range at Black's, which ridge is believed to be payably auriferous with a good water-supply. If this eventuates, there will be a number of miners at work there in the near future.

There are a few miners at work at German Hill and other localities—making a living at least.

At Naseby nothing of importance in mining has occurred since date of last return; everything appears to be going in a satisfactory manner as usual.

Gold to the value of £4,309 17s. 10d. was produced in this district, and sold to the various banks during the year.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

J. McENNIS,
Warden.

Mr. Warden CRUICKSHANK, Lawrence, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, MINES DEPARTMENT, Wellington.
SIR,—

Warden's Office, Lawrence, 6th April, 1906.

I have the honour to forward to you herewith statistical returns for the year ended the 31st December, 1905, and to submit the following report on the several mining subdistricts under my charge for the same period:—

WETHERSTONE'S AND BLUE SPUR.

In the Wetherstone's district three claims have been working during the year—viz., the Golden Rise mining party, the Golden Crescent Sluicing Company (Limited), and the Local Industry Gold-mining Company (Limited). The latter company, having worked out their claim at Wetherstone's, has now commenced operations at the lower end of Gabriel's Gully, where there is a heavy deposit of tailings.

The manager of the Blue Spur and Gabriel's Gully Consolidated Gold Company (Limited), (Mr. J. Howard Jackson) has kindly supplied me with the following details of the year's work at the Consolidated Mine at Blue Spur: Average number of men employed, 28; quantity of cement treated, 222,330 cubic yards; quantity of gold won, 1,722 oz., value £6,836 5s. 5d.; cost of winning the gold, £2 16s. 6½d. per oz.; amount paid in wages, £3,875 9s. 2d.; amount paid for explosives, £597 3s.; amount paid for upkeep of water-races, £644 12s. 5d.; total local expenditure for the year, £4,895 10s. 2d. The water-supply, owing to a dry period in late winter and spring, was not so good as during the previous year; but in consequence of improvements in the design of the elevators their efficiency has been materially increased. It is gratifying to note that no accidents or labour troubles occurred at the mine during the year. I have to report that the men at this mine consider they have a grievance to complain of, inasmuch as the tariff impositions appear to have excluded competition in gum boots; the price of indiarubber has increased considerably, and one firm of makers would seem to have a monopoly; and the consequence is that gum boots, which cost the men £1 8s. a pair a year or so ago, are now £2 3s., and the men cannot work without them.

In Munro's Gully, the claims owned by Messrs. Kitto and party, Thomas and party, and Browne and party have been working throughout the year with fair results.