

Mr. Warden RAWSON, Westport, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Westport, 5th April, 1909.

I have the honour to report as follows upon the gold-mining industry in the Westport portion of the Karamea Mining District for the twelve months ended 31st December, 1908 :—

There were granted ten alluvial and four quartz claims, as compared with seven alluvial and five quartz claims for the year 1907.

At Addison's fair average returns are being obtained. A party proposes taking up several claims to work the tailings which have been collecting as the result of forty years' mining in the locality. It is estimated that some 600,000 pounds' worth of gold has been taken from the neighbourhood, and, as miners consider that not more than 75 per cent. of the gold is actually saved, it is thought that the tailings are worth working. These tailings are practically confined to two creeks, and with a suitable "blow-up" plant good results are anticipated.

Jenkins and Wilson, who, with the assistance of a Government subsidy, have been driving a prospecting-tunnel at Giles's Creek, have now discontinued work. Twelve hundred feet was driven without anything of workable value being discovered. Sufficient water is not obtainable in this locality in the summer months, and the parties have now turned their attention to opening up a claim on Ballarat Creek. It is understood they intend to continue driving the tunnel at some future time.

A miner at Fairdown Terrace is said to be making fair wages.

Generally speaking, mining in the Karamea District may be said to be much in the same condition as it has been for years past.

Addison's is the principal seat of activity, and occasionally one hears of good returns. The general opinion throughout the district seems to be that the country has been very imperfectly prospected, and that a thorough and systematic examination would reveal the existence of much mineral wealth.

The statement that the Government intends to carry out prospecting operations was received with great satisfaction, though doubts are expressed whether, unless the scheme includes the costly process of boring, the result will be of much practical value, as far as this district is concerned, at any rate.

LYELL.

Gold-mining in this locality has been steadily going down. Only four special claims and two extended claims have been granted during the year—two of the former for quartz and two for dredging. The New Alpine still continues to work with some twenty men, and is understood to be getting fair stone. The work during the year has consisted principally of sinking the main shaft and stoping the lowest level. This is the only quartz-mine actively employing men. A few prospectors have been out most of the year, but have nothing to report.

Mr. De Filippi has sold his dredge at Three-channel Flat to a Greymouth syndicate. The dredge has been floated up the river to Flat Bush Creek, with the result that good gold is being obtained from week to week.

The two other dredges, Hansen and Gilstrom's, at Old Diggings, and Smeaton's Dredging Syndicate's, at Rocklands, have also been working steadily during the year, with fair results.

SEDDONVILLE.

Very little gold-mining is being carried on in this district.

MURCHISON.

MacNamara and Rogers and Li Long and party, at Six-mile Creek; Beilby and party and Hunter and party, at Horse Terrace; J. Keys, at Mid-Maruia; Thomson and party, at Warwick Flat; Barclay and Lewis, at Newton Flat; and the Walker-Maruia Sluicing Company (Limited), at Upper Maruia, have been working fairly constantly. Fairhall and Prebble, at Newton Flat, have had a lot of dead work to do.

There are a number of Europeans and Chinese mining through the district, and most of them are making fair wages.

CHARLESTON.

An application was made by a syndicate for a special claim for the purpose of working the grass-covered sand-ridge between the sea-beach and a number of freehold sections owned by some old Scandinavian settlers who make a fair living by beachcombing. These settlers strongly objected to the grant, on the ground, amongst others, that the ridge protected their land from being inundated by the sea and injured by drifting sand. The syndicate proposed to work by the dry-blowing process. However, in consequence, it is understood, of the failure of similar operations on the Greymouth beaches, the application was allowed to lapse.

J. M. Powell continues to obtain good results from his beach claim.

A prospecting party is engaged in seeking for gold in the ranges.

KARAMEA.

The twenty-two special quartz claims referred to in my last report have been granted with numerous water-rights, &c.

I have, &c.,
E. RAWSON, Warden.