

At Roxburgh considerable interest is being taken in prospecting the old river-beds, a Keystone borer being now engaged in this work. The number of applications for land and water dealt with in this Court shows that a considerable amount of labour and capital is being expended in mining in the district.

I have, &c.,

J. E. EVANS, Warden.

Mr. Warden CRUIKSHANK, Invercargill, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Invercargill, 27th April, 1909.

I have the honour to submit herewith the annual report on the several mining subdivisions in my district for the year ending 31st December, 1908 :—

ROUND HILL.

The only mining companies now at work on this field are the Round Hill and Ourawera companies. There are still a few individual miners carrying on mining operations, but not to a very great extent.

Round Hill Mining Company.—At the beginning of the year operations were much retarded by the meagre rainfall, which had a disastrous effect on the gold-returns. Consequently the profit at July (the end of the financial year) was small. After April, however, matters improved, and the two elevators worked fairly continuously throughout the year. About 1,200,000 cubic yards were mined. The mining-area held at present is about 140 acres. The water-races are in fairly good condition. At the end of the year an electric-light plant was installed by the National Electrical Company of Dunedin, and is working satisfactorily.

Ourawera Gold-mining Company.—This company was also handicapped by the scarcity of water in the early part of the year. During the latter part of the year the ground worked was very irregular in depth, and poorer than was expected. Consequently, it has not been a very successful year for the shareholders. However, the elevator has now been removed to Italian Gully, which is supposed to be the richest part of Round Hill. An aerial tram has been erected, which, worked by the hydraulic winch, should effect considerable economy in the removal of stones and logs, as its operation is quicker than that of a sledge.

OREPUKI.

Matters are practically unaltered as regards the development of mining in this place, and the same number of miners seem to be kept at work. But some of them have turned their attention to the Pahia field, situated between Orepuki and Round Hill. It is known that payable gold exists there, but great difficulty is occasioned in working the ground on account of the want of an outlet for tailings. Should Okoia Creek be proclaimed a sludge-channel, there is no doubt that a very payable goldfield will be opened up. The Pahia Sluicing Company are handicapped by this difficulty and also by the existence in the neighbourhood of several freehold properties, the owners of which object to the pollution of the creek.

During the year the Chun Wah Tong Company ceased operations, and have transferred their rights to John Whelan.

A large area of the land in the vicinity of the township is being surveyed, and is to be offered for selection by the Land Board on renewal-lease terms. The question of compensation was discussed by me with the Miners' Association, and it was mutually arranged that this land should be leased upon the condition that the leased land be opened for prospecting and mining free from compensation, except for buildings.

PRESERVATION.

Increased activity has been displayed during the year in connection with the development of the mining industry in this locality. Four companies have been floated, to date, to work ground around the inlets—viz., the Tarawera, Morning Star, Crown, and Gulches' Head Companies; but the areas held are at present under protection either on account of the scarcity of water or for the purpose of allowing time to procure suitable machinery to work the ground.

WYNDHAM.

Mining is almost a dead-letter in this subdistrict. As far as I can learn, the only persons mining are Mr. C. R. Brunton and Mr. William Bennett, both having claims on the sandhills at Haldane, on the south coast. I understand the former has been fairly successful.

I have, &c.,

E. CRUIKSHANK, Warden.