

Mr. Warden BARTHOLOMEW, Dunedin, to the UNDER-SECRETARY OF MINES, Wellington.
 SIR,— Warden's Office, Dunedin, 2nd March, 1914.

I have the honour to present my report for the year ended the 31st December, 1913, for the mining district under my charge.

LAWRENCE, WAIPORI, WAITAHUNA.

At the Warden's Court, Lawrence, the following business was transacted during the year: Miners' rights issued, 133; applications received, 65; registrations effected, 91; suits entered, 6. During the year eighteen claims were surrendered and sixteen new claims granted, but no new localities were included in the latter. In this subdistrict there are but three dredges working—two at Glenore, and one at Adams Flat—on ground which has been wholly or partly worked for many years. The water-supply for sluicing has been plentiful, and in April some damage was done by flood, especially at Waipori. At this place a claim of 400 acres of worked ground was applied for on the flat, to be worked by a new type of dredge driven by power from the Dunedin City Corporation electrical works at Waipori Falls. There were local objections to the large area applied for, as it would monopolize ground commanded by present water rights, and, after an inspection had been made by the Warden, an area of 100 acres was recommended to be granted to the applicants.

ROXBURGH.

During the year mining in this subdistrict shared in the general decline of the industry in Otago. The dredges still working were hampered to an unusual extent during the twelve months by the flooded state of the Molyneux. The dredges are now almost all held by private parties, who alone can make things pay where the ground has been worked before. The sluicing claims have had a fair year, but were also hampered by the floods. No new areas have been taken up, and all workings are confined to the Molyneux River and the neighbourhood of the river itself. The great development of the fruit industry is diverting attention from mining, and the great success which the widespread orchard-planting has met with shows up in still greater degree the barren waste of good lands caused in many instances by unrestricted mining operations in the past.

The destruction of valuable land by mining operations is still proceeding in a most marked manner at Island Block. This is a fine area of flat land which grows splendid crops, and the huge heaps of tailings adjacent thereto—the barren corpse of mining—form an arresting spectacle of the destruction caused by the present methods of mining.

Attention may be directed to the manner Victoria deals with the problem. There the rich agricultural overburden is removed and is replaced on the gravel—the tailings—after the same is levelled. This is, no doubt, a matter of increased cost to the miner; but might it not be laid down as a sound maxim that if the land is not sufficiently rich in auriferous deposits to bear the increased cost of the more expensive method of mining, it should not be mined at all. I should add, however, that I have recently read that the Victorian regulations have not proved effective to achieve their object.

The land above referred to is freehold, which presents difficulties. But are these insuperable if, as a matter of policy, interference is deemed desirable? The law is stated in *Aitken v. Swindley* (15 N.Z. L.R. 517): "A Crown grant of land does not of itself convey to the grantee the royal metals in the land, or prevent the Crown from working or authorizing others to work them. Yet the effect of the mining legislation of the colony is that the Crown has given up the prerogative right to mine for gold on Crown-granted land."

So far as I am aware, the Crown has not hitherto interfered with mining on private lands. It has been my desire in the above report, without exceeding my functions as Warden, to direct attention to a particular aspect of mining.

I have, &c.,

J. R. BARTHOLOMEW, Warden.

Mr. Warden YOUNG, Gore, to the UNDER-SECRETARY OF MINES, Wellington.

SIR,— Warden's Office, Gore, 28th March, 1914.

I have the honour to present my report for the year ended the 31st December, 1913, on that portion of the Otago Mining District under my charge.

QUEENSTOWN, ARROWTOWN, CARDRONA.

The mining industry in this portion of the district is in very much the same condition as it was at the end of last year. Most of the privileges granted were to be used in connection with existing claims.

Prospecting and development work in connection with the scheelite lodes at the head of Lake Wakatipu continues to be carried on actively, and seven new mineral licenses and twelve prospecting licenses were granted.

The Melbourne syndicate that acquired several privileges with the intention of working the old Invincible Quartz-mines, in the Richardson Range, went into liquidation before undertaking any development-work, but others have since applied for the ground.