

REPORT BY MR. MINING SURVEYOR WRIGHT.

SIR,—

Mining Survey Office,  
Queenstown, 31st March, 1866.

I have the honor to furnish for your information the following Report on the condition and prospect of the Wakatipu Gold Field at date 31st March, 1866; together with tables showing the population and value of mining plant. I also attach plans of groups of leaseholds, surveyed in the vicinity of the Scandinavian and Arrow Reefs, having the features of the country and other matters sketched upon them.

This district is again assuming a permanent and settled aspect, and there appears little inclination on the part of the miners to leave it. The exodus to the West Coast is now stayed, and the population has during the last six months been slightly on the increase. The Queenstown Division has lost a number of its mining population, but the Upper Shotover has gained, and the Arrow Division is exactly as it was stated in my Report for September, 1865.

The number of miners occupied in river workings has greatly diminished, the continued wet weather, and the heavy floods in the early part of the summer having obliged the holders of river claims to abandon them. For about two months out of the last six there was scarcely a man engaged upon such work in the whole district, and certainly not one either on the Shotover or Arrow Rivers, and three or four escorts left this district with little else but terrace gold. The numbers at present working the rivers and creeks are 208 against 398, and those working the terraces 558 against 492 at the date of my Report of September last. There will, however, in all probability be a reaction in this class of work now that the rivers are low and the cold weather setting in; but it is not at all probable that the numbers will ever again exceed those working upon the terraces.

The table showing the description and value of mining plant is low in comparison to past statistics, and is accounted for by the whole of the water-wheels, and such like mechanical appliances having been, with few exceptions, destroyed and carried off by the floods in January last.

Terrace working by means of sluicing has now become a permanent and steady occupation, yielding in most cases highly satisfactory results to the various companies so engaged. I know of no race having a fair supply of water that is standing idle, and in some instances weekly dividends of £10, and even more, have been made, and almost all of them are yielding good wages. The Mountain Race Company at Skipper's are now engaged in extending their race beyond Fisher's Town to some very high point above Butcher's Gully, known to be good sluicing ground, but not having as yet a supply of water to work it.

Tunnelling is still resorted to upon the Arrow River and Twelve-mile, and sluicing is also greatly carried on. Some very fine races exist in these localities at a great height above the rivers, but still not of sufficient height to command a vast area of known auriferous ground on the upper terraces.

At the Cardrona the deep lead there discovered is being most successfully followed up, and some of the richest ground ever opened in this district has there been proved; but the works on this lead suffered materially during the last half-year from the continued rain, and every shaft on the lead was at one time completely flooded out; the greater part of the Companies have however repaired damages, and are in full work once more.

I have been brief in the foregoing description of the position of mining matters with reference to alluvial workings, as I am obliged to devote a considerable portion of this Report to describing the progress made in the development of the quartz reefs. I will only, therefore, reiterate that the alluvial workings are now characterized by a stability that will render this class of work permanent, and give to (at least) the numbers now engaged, steady and remunerative employment for many years to come.

There are now in the Upper Shotover and Arrow Districts together thirty-seven holdings upon the recognized quartz reefs, viz.: under the leasing regulations, thirty-four, and in prospecting claims, three. The following is a list of them, showing their titles, the reefs for which they are taken up, and the length which each Company occupies upon the line of it:—

Name of Reef.	Title of Company.	Length in Feet.
Scandinavian	Hibernian Quartz Mining Company	1,200
"	Otago (No. 1)	404
"	Otago (No. 2)	719
"	Scandinavian Prospectors	431
"	Skipper's Company	332
"	Rose Diamond Company	514
"	Ariel Quartz Mining Company	329
"	New Year's Gift Company	1,200
"	British American Company	1,200