

during the half-year. Two more extended claims on the Five-mile Beach have been applied for, and one on Hunt's Beach, which are not yet surveyed.

The Chief Surveyor, Hokitika.

J. R. BROWNE,  
District Surveyor.

### Enclosure 5 in No. 2.

OKARITO DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Okarito, 31st December, 1869.

In compliance with your instructions, I have the honor to submit the following observations on the state of the Okarito during the last half-year; and I believe it will be gratifying to you and the Council, that, as regards population, yield of gold, and revenue, it has far exceeded that of the previous six months, and taking the whole year, there is an improvement on that of 1868, as shown by the returns annexed.

1. *Population*.—The population of the district, comprised within the boundaries commencing south bank of the Wanganui River and terminating at Bruce Bay, consists of 461 souls (as per annexed table A), which shows an increase of 101 since June last. The population was then estimated at 360; and comparing the whole of the present year with that of 1868 it is also in its favour, the population having during the latter year fluctuated from 456 to 308, and during 1869 from 322 to 461. I may further say it is gradually increasing. In addition to the above there are twenty-two Maoris, mostly residing at Bruce Bay.

2. *Diggings*.—With the exception of four men up Cook's River and two up the Waikukupa, the diggings are still entirely confined to the sea-beaches; and although during the last six months there have been several other parties up these two rivers, some of whom did exceedingly well, yet as the gold is found mostly in patches, or in the bed of the river—difficult to work in consequence of floods—there is little inducement for men to remain.

The principal diggings are still at the Five-mile Beach; and lately, what with some fresh ground that has turned out better than was expected, and with the increased facility of obtaining water, renewed impetus has been given to mining operations in this locality. Four mining leases have within the last two months been granted, one of five acres, and the other three of ten acres each; the former one is in active operation, but the three latter have not yet commenced being worked.

The Alpine Race Company are enlarging their race, to enable them to afford a greater supply of water to the Beach. At Hunt's Beach the population has been gradually increasing, and those there are doing very fairly. A mining lease of five acres of ground has just been applied for, which, if granted, the applicants intend to work with steam power, having during the present month landed a steam-engine of about 10-horse power on that beach.

At Gillespie's Beach an extended race of upwards of five miles in length, and to convey fourteen sluice-heads of water, has just been commenced by a party of miners who have come down on purpose to do so. When finished it will draw a larger population to this beach, which only requires a good supply to make it payable.

The large extended Water Race, about fourteen miles north of this, between the Saltwater Creek and Little Wanganui River, which has been in course of formation for upwards of twelve months by a very enterprising party of six miners, is nearly completed; it is five miles in length, two miles of which is fluming, in some parts upwards of thirty-eight feet in height, and intended to carry twelve sluice-heads of water. They have been to very considerable expense to carry out this undertaking, having erected a saw-mill worked by water power. When this race is finished, it will enable the beach in the neighbourhood to be profitably worked, and support a population of between sixty and seventy people.

The expenditure of labour and capital by working miners in bringing in extensive races like the two last named is a convincing proof that these beach diggings are worth working, provided the supply of water is abundant.

3. *Machinery*.—At the Five-mile Beach there are seven large wheels and one saw-mill, all worked by water power. At Saltwater Creek, one saw-mill, worked by water power; and at Hunt's Beach there is a steam-engine of about 10-horse power.

4. *Prospecting*.—I regret to say there are no prospecting parties out; in fact all the miners are occupied with beach digging, and do not appear inclined to face the hardships of prospecting inland so long as they can make fair wages on the beaches.

5. *Revenue*.—The yield of gold during the current half-year has been 4,559 oz. 1 dwt. 4 gr., of which 2,706 oz. 10 dwt. have been shipped, 1,999 oz. 3 dwt. 22 gr. sent overland to Hokitika by four storekeepers in this district, and 340 oz. are ready for shipment, and were intended to be sent by the "Waipara," had she called on the 22nd instant, on her return trip from the South. This shows an increase over the last half-year of 2,011 oz. 8 dwt. 10 gr. The yield during the whole year has been 7,106 oz. 13 dwt. 22 gr. as against 6,948 oz. in 1868, showing an increase of 158 oz. 13 dwt. 22 gr. (*vide* return annexed marked B). The Customs Revenue for the current half-year amounts to £1,228 7s. 7d., an increase on that of the last half-year of £207 19s. 7d., and taking the whole year the excess is £462 5s. over 1868 (annexed return C). The Gold Fields Revenue for this half-year is £719 12s. 6d., an increase of £371 10s. over the last half-year, whilst taking the whole year there is an increase of £318 9s. over that of 1868 (annexed return marked D). Notwithstanding that during the present year only 4,767 oz. 10 dwt. have passed through the Customs here, and that there has been a consequent loss of £249 duty on 1,999 oz. 3 dwt. 22 gr. sent overland, which of course will go in favour of Hokitika, the total of this year's revenue exceeds that of 1868 by £598 17s. 6d., although in the latter year 6,222 oz. of gold passed through the Customs and paid duty at Okarito, and only 726 oz. were sent overland.

6. *Provisions*.—As it may be of interest to Government to know the price of provisions throughout the district, I annex a list, marked E.