

themselves by some unfortunate fatality with continuing the same general line the Survey Department stated was impracticable, indeed, making only occasional deviations from the old track, and although a great deal of money was expended by the Road Board in clearing this track, the expenditure appears to have been useless. A good road to the Lake would, I believe, lead to a great deal of gold bearing ground being worked: and also open up a considerable extent of agricultural country. Should the opportunity present itself, and I can be away from the township a sufficient length of time, I propose to examine the different tracks to the Lake with a view of observing whether the Canoe Point track could not be struck from the township, and thus a good line of road to the Lake be obtained.

There are at present but two parties of four men each, and one "hatter,"* digging on the three mile beach south of Okarito. The beach is about two miles long, with a lagoon in the rear of it, which sometimes runs out at the northern end of the beach, and sometimes closes up. One party working off a race are doing well, so long as the water lasts, but are subject to frequent interruptions from the supply of water falling off in dry weather. The other party are working with water from a portion of the Lagoon, held by a long dam, and are doing very well, and generally have an adequate supply of water. The hatter has a small race and usually relies on surfacing. But little stripping is done on this beach, there being some gold all through, and the water rights being held by the parties working it, all the sand is put through. In the early times fifty or sixty men were working on this beach, and some of the best claims in the district were opened here. The number of men fluctuated considerably until the last two years, during which there have been only nine or ten miners on it. Formerly on this beach some rich surfacing was thrown up, and men working on the beach reaped rich harvests, but for the last two years there has been but very little of it; first observed soon after the loss of a bag of gold at the Five-mile Bluff, it was then thought likely to have been that gold thrown up on the beach, but the quantity obtained far exceeded that then lost. It is most likely gold washed down the Waiho in heavy freshes, taken out to sea, and then thrown up on the beach in large quantities of sand; subsequent seas sluice out the sand, and leave the gold and black sand on the surface. This, I suppose, is how all the gold found on the beach has, in the course of years been deposited.

* A miner working without mates, entirely on his own account.

The Okarito district was originally opened at the beginning of 1866, through a small craft taking down miners to Bruce Bay and Hunt's Beach; but as the ground in these parts was not found sufficiently good for the times, the miners travelled up northwards overland, prospecting on their road, one party discovering good gold on the Five-mile Beach, and there were soon about 3000 miners at work, and it turned out the richest beach worked on the Coast, many of the men making from £600 to £1200 for about three months work. The beach continued to be worked, but the claims became poorer and poorer, the pick of the ground having been easily worked, was soon got through. Then the rush to Fox's and the Buller took away the greater part of the miners, and the subsequent rush to the Haast took many others, leaving only 300 or 400 men; on the failure of the Haast rush, some of the old five-mile miners returned to bring in a race, and after considerable difficulty, and about eighteen months labour, a party of eight men brought in the Alpine Race, which has continued to supply the beach with water to this day, but from the expensive nature of the work, and the limited supply of water, it has been necessarily supplied at the high rate of from £8 to £12 a head, and still at a loss to the race party. The Okarito Company also brought in a race and supplied water, as well as worked a claim of their own, charging the same price for the water as the other Company. In the end the shareholders in this Company lost every shilling they had invested. Consequent on these races having been brought in, small companies were formed to wash the ground in leases and "extended claims," and about twelve water-wheels, with pumping machinery, tramway, &c, placed upon them, and the whole of the beach re-worked. In some cases the headings of the original workings paid small amounts, but the best results were obtained from patches of sound ground unworked at the first and mullocked up and lost sight of. The ground has been generally re-worked, some of it twice, and the greater part of the miners have now left the beach, but the few remaining, some sixty-three, are doing pretty well, from being able to choose freely their ground and having a more constant supply of water from the less number requiring it. The beach will find employment for the number of men now on it for years, and with cheap water would employ many more. The sinking has varied from five feet to thirty feet. In the first working of the beach after the races were brought in some parties had winding gear attached to their water-wheels, others used horses and trucks, but the use of the winding gear has been discontinued on account of the expense and scarcity of water.

Towards the head of the Waiho River the ground has often been tried; about four years since a party of four men worked there for about twelve months, and although they found some good patches, they only made something below wages and abandoned the ground. Those trying it since have only made small wages. A party of three men are at present working just above the forks, very near the head of the river, but with what success is not known, but as they have continued working for about six months, it is supposed that they must be doing fairly.

There is every indication of gold-bearing reefs high up on this river. Gold has been found conjoined with quartz, and the cutting down of the banks of the rivers by continual water wearing has disclosed quartz reefs, but none bearing gold have been observed, but very little prospecting has been done in this direction.

On the beach south of the Waiho, one or two miners are working, who have been there for some years. The ground is poor, but having water power available, they have done fairly.

Between the Oamaru and the Waikupakupa good patches of gold have been obtained, but miners can only work for three or four months in the year, when the rivers are very low. It is the same with Cook's River. From the nature of the gold, experienced miners consider that on each of these rivers there are quartz reefs; but the denseness of the bush and *debris* covering the ground would generally prevent the cropping out of a reef being as observable as it would be in some countries. Two men at present working up Cook's River, washing the river bed as far as the stream allows them to go into it, are making small wages; two others are engaged prospecting.

Gillespie's is a beach about two and a-half miles in length, with a lagoon in the rear of it. There