

surpassed for wheat growing, and appears to remain in heart for four and five seasons without rest. There are two fine water-power flour mills in the Arrow District, situated only one mile apart, and one mile from Arrowtown. Flour from these mills is sent every season to the different gold fields towns between Arrowtown and Naseby. The farmers are improving their lands and tenements very much, and purchasing their lease areas as soon as by law they are able. They complain of scarcity of labourers, high wages, want of grass for cattle, difficulty in procuring manure for renovating their lands, poor markets, high cartage, long credit, and the unsoundness of the district timber for fencing—yet a majority of them have increased in wealth every year. Some who eight years ago commenced without capital are comparatively wealthy men; and I have not heard of a single instance of insolvency among this class, who, to their credit be it said, have done much by dint of perseverance and industry in making themselves and their children homes; and the Wakatip, Shotover, and Arrow Valleys, as a farming district, is one of the most inviting places for settlement in Otago. Without a doubt, the combined interests of farming and mining will always cause a splendid revenue to the Government—a good field for labour will gradually increase the value of the land, and provide homes for a much larger population when the fever for speedy fortune by gold lottery has abated. In nearly eleven years' experience on the Otago Gold Fields, I have not seen better signs of real prosperity (settlement, and advancement all around), nor more grumbling, than I have in this district.

Arrowtown itself is substantially built. Some of its stone stores have cost in building £1,800, £1,000, and £800. It has its public library with room for one hundred and fifty persons, having a hall, stage, newspaper room, and for books a fourth apartment. There are two churches substantially and expensively built. Private houses (of stone) have been built at a cost of as much as £350 to £400, and almost every resident in the place has his freehold sections, many of which will be shortly used for private houses, when labour is more reasonable. I attribute the signs of prosperity a great deal to the lines of communication made by the Government recently between Arrowtown and the mountain diggings—Matapapu, &c.—together with the success of the farmers in readily disposing of their crops, which have attained a high standing in the market already, so favourable is the climate, the land, and irrigation to their development.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

H. A. STRATFORD, Warden.

No. 20.

Mr. Warden BEETHAM to the UNDER SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Queenstown, 13th April, 1873.

I have the honor to forward herewith my report upon the gold field in my charge, during the year ending 31st March, 1873.

A portion of the district has, during the past year, been placed under a separate Warden, and I am therefore unable to compare the yield of gold with that of the previous year. The yield for the district of Queenstown, which is under my charge, is, however, as nearly as possible the same as during the year ending 31st March, 1872. Without being able to report any fresh discoveries of importance, I have no hesitation in saying that the district was never in a more prosperous condition than it is at present. The development of the auriferous resources of the district has received a great impetus by the introduction of capital, and by the adoption of a better and more systematic system of working ground, which has been merely scratched over by the ordinary process. Large and important works have been undertaken in various portions of the district, in ground which, although known to be auriferous, has hitherto been wholly untried; and amongst these works I may mention, as perhaps the most important, the New Channel Company, and the endeavour to trace the Arthur's Point Lead.

In other portions of the district, claims which are known to be very valuable, but which have been only partially worked, have been amalgamated, and thrown into companies under the Mining Companies Limited Liability Act, with the view of their more complete and systematic working. Amongst the claims of this class I may indicate those known as Grace and Egar's Dispute. Their claims or mining leases have been amalgamated, and will, I understand, be placed under the control and management of a mining manager—a system which will no doubt result in the ground being thoroughly worked at the least possible outlay. There exists in this district an enormous area of ground, which can only be profitably worked in a similar manner.

The quartz lodes at Skipper's Creek and the Upper Shotover are being steadily worked. I am informed that the stone of the Nugget Reef has averaged about 10 dwts. throughout.

The quartz batteries have not, during the summer and autumn been in full work, as the water supply has in consequence of the extreme dryness of the weather, been very inadequate to the requirements of the machinery. I should say that not more than half of the stampers have been used latterly.

The amount of gold escorted during the year ending 31st March, 1873, from Queenstown was 20,746 oz. 9 dwts.

The population of the district, both mining and agricultural, is increasing steadily, and in all parts of the gold field substantial stone buildings are replacing the more temporary class of wooden buildings.

Attached will be found returns showing the price of provisions, value of mining plant, &c.

I have, &c.

The Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

R. BEETHAM, Warden.

No. 21.

Mr. Warden WOOD to the UNDER SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Switzers, 21st April, 1873.

I have the honor to enclose herewith statistical returns for the Switzers division of the Otago Gold Fields District.