

rapid progress. It will, however, be fully twelve months before they have their race completed to the terraces over the township. Even then they will be to a considerable extent dependent on the rainfall for a supply, owing to the small quantity of water in the creeks of which they own the right. The undertaking will, no doubt, eventually repay the small number of shareholders concerned, as the terraces which it will command over the township are known to be rich. These terraces are above the elevation of any water at present available. The advantage to the district of this race will be merely nominal, as the wants of a few sluicing claims would exhaust the whole supply. The two races above mentioned are the only ones at work or in contemplation, and even if they could carry the full quantity of water for which they are registered, they would only command a mere tithe of the known auriferous unworked ground.

Referring to Jones' Flat, the visitor of some five years back would scarcely recognize, in its present lifeless and desolate aspect, the place then teeming with life and activity. Where five steam-engines were busily at work, nothing now remains but great heaps of tailings and skeleton poppet-heads, and the sole cause of this sad change is want of water. These engines, which cost the district many thousands, are now either lying eaten up with rust or are dismembered and sold. From the fate of these engines it is evident that steam-power is a thing of the past, so far as Ross is concerned. Had the capitalists of the district had the experience of the present to guide them, the whistle of a steam-engine would never have been heard in Ross. A race such as the proposed Mikonui could have been constructed twice over with the money thus thrown away, and the district, instead of being what it is, would have been, as it was at first, the most prosperous and largest contributor of revenue in the Province. This gold field is different from, and superior to, any other in the Province, from the fact that gold is found in payable quantities, in successive bottoms or layers, at the greatest depth yet reached. To give an idea of the possible future in store for Ross, with a large supply of water for the flat, it may be stated that when the drainage engine was in operation, one claim of about one acre and a half in extent was giving handsome dividends, though rated for drainage at £70 per week. There is a large portion of ground on the flat, known to be equally as good as the above claim, as yet unworked, and yet while the miners know such to be the case they are obliged to leave for other and poorer fields. It remains with the Government whether the district will go down altogether or become again prosperous. Owing to the impoverished state of the district, any scheme to partly aid the people would be useless. Whatever is done must be done entirely by the Government. There is no doubt that such outlay would be repaid, both directly and indirectly.

The Government have undertaken the making of a road from Bowen to Okarita, which will be the means of opening up a large tract of country both to the miner, grazier, and agriculturist. Even if there were not an acre of auriferous ground along the whole route, the sale of Crown lands and consequent settlement will be a source of material advancement to the district. I have been informed by parties working on the road that there is a large extent of land well suited for agricultural purposes along the line. In a district such as this, with mixed auriferous and agricultural land, water-races and roads are absolutely necessary to effect permanent settlement. Those best suited for the place are such as are willing to work if they can see a fair return for their labour.

The amount of gold forwarded from Ross to Hokitika during the year has been 15,520 ounces, at £3 16s. 3d.; value, £59,170.

	£	s.	d.
Gold Fields Revenue	1,896	13	3
Warden's Court, Fees and Fines	32	15	0
Resident Magistrate's Court, Fees and Fines	302	15	0
Export Duty on Gold	1,552	0	0
	<u>£3,784</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

This total shows a falling off in the revenue for the year of nearly one-half.

Wages.—Managers, £6 per week; underground captains, £3 10s.; carpenters, £3 10s.; blacksmiths, £4; miners, £3.

Timber.—Caps, 9 feet, £7 10s. per 100; round props, 7 feet, £6 per 100; split props, 1 in. × 7 in., £4 10s. per 100; laths, 5 feet, £1 10s. per 100; firewood, £1 per cord; sawn timber, 14s. per 100 feet.

Freight.—From Hokitika to Ross, twenty miles, 70 tons per month, £2 10s. per ton of 2,000 lbs.

The population may be estimated as follows:—

European—Male	1,000
Female	600
Chinese	150
	<u>1,750</u>

Warden's Court.—Number of cases, 45.

RESIDENT MAGISTRATE'S COURT.

No. of Cases—Civil	406
Criminal	78
Total	<u>484</u>

Amount sued for, £2,783 4s. 3d.

The following number of rights, licenses, registrations, and leases have been issued or applied for, and forwarded for consideration:—

	No.
Miners' Rights at £1	404
Business Licenses at £5	38