

exhausted. Two of the claims were first sluiced from the surface downwards 10 to 30 feet, until no sufficient slope could be obtained to carry off the tailings; then, by means of shafts and drives, the lowest strata of 6 or 8 feet were tunnelled out and passed through crushing-mills. All this work has been profitable, and now the whole of the remaining drift, from top to bottom (60 to 80 feet), is being excavated in a face, and crushed with, I am informed, satisfactory results; and it seems to be certain that, before the miners have done with it, what was once a precipitous hill will become a deep lake.

Waipori, Waitahuna, and other outlying places, maintain about the usual number of miners. The average earnings have, I believe, decreased; but the cheapening of food by railway facilities and other causes are a good set-off to the reduction of earnings.

In quartz-mining, from time to time, reports are rife and expectations high regarding the value of new discoveries; but I know of only one reef—that of the Nil Desperandum Company, at Waipori—that appears to be profitably worked. The Waipori Company and the Table-hill Company have both suspended operations, but I trust they have sufficient confidence in their properties to resume work before long. A prospecting company has been organized to continue prospecting Clarke's Hill, in which some splendid patches of gold were discovered some years ago; and I have great hopes that further prospecting through the district will lead to some satisfactory results in this branch of gold-mining.

Agricultural Settlement.—The occupation of land by purchase and leasing has continued to progress, and there is now very little Crown land in the district, except what is required for mining purposes and reserves.

There have been issued during the year 18 agricultural leases for 2,302 acres, 20 exchange leases for 1,578 acres, and 23 deferred-payment licenses for 4,067 acres. There are now current 275 agricultural leases, 130 exchange leases, and 143 deferred-payment licenses and leases held in this district, comprising altogether an area of 55,370 acres.

Revenue.—The gold fields revenue, and rents under agricultural and deferred-payment leases for the year ending 31st March last amounted to £9,682 0s. 7d., and the fees and fines in the Resident Magistrate's and Licensing Courts to £325 3s. 7d.; in all £10,007 4s. 2d., the largest sum reached in any one year.

Courts.—The cases decided in the Resident Magistrate's Court numbered 398, and in the Warden's Court 104 cases and 365 applications were dealt with.

I have, &c.,
E. H. CAREW,
Warden.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 15.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Dunedin, 13th July, 1878.

I have the honor to forward the accompanying statistical returns relating to the Hindon Mining District for the year ending 31st March, 1878, and in doing so I beg to state that the information they contain should only be regarded as approximately reliable, inasmuch as it has been gathered chiefly from papers in the office, and persons but partially acquainted with the district.

The mining operations during the year have not been of such a character as to necessitate a visit to the locality; but I hope when the time arrives for making out the next annual report that I shall be in a position to afford more valuable and definite information, based upon personal observation.

The only change in the development of the gold field has been the prospecting of some apparently well-defined quartz reefs in the vicinity of Mullocky Gully. Several parties have taken up mining lease areas there, which await survey before the applications are finally dealt with. It is the intention of one of the parties to erect machinery for thoroughly testing the stone, from a trial crushing of which a very fair prospect has already been obtained. Judging by reports that have reached me from time to time, I have reason to believe that ere long one or more of the reefs now known to be auriferous will prove payable so.

The agricultural leases returned last year by my predecessor as in force at the 31st March, 1877, have since been purchased.

I have, &c.,
J. P. MAITLAND,
Warden.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 16.

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

SIR,—

Switzers, 5th June, 1878.

I have the honor to forward the statistical returns for the past year of the district under my charge.

I cannot report any improvement in the Switzers Division, nor do I look for any till the land (20,000 acres—an education reserve) which it is proposed to throw open for settlement on deferred payments so dealt with.

There is no perceptible difference in the other portions of the district.

The Orepuhi Gold Field, on the western slope of the Longwood Range, maintains its character as a good payable field for a limited population, in consequence of the small supply of water obtainable.

As I reported last year, prospecting for quartz reefs was being prosecuted on the eastern side of the Longwoods, and in April last Patrick and Morgan Hayes, who have been prospecting off and on for the last eight or nine years, discovered a well-defined reef running North-west and South-East,