

4th. Tannery.—The export of hides from the district is considerable; and the establishment of a tannery would be of great benefit to the district, and to Wellington City. For the purpose of encouraging this kind of industry generally, the Council would respectfully recommend the policy of offering inducements for the planting of the Australian wattle.

5th. Cement.—It is considered that there are many facilities for the production of this article in the district, and, were such an industry established, a good export trade could be carried on in addition to the local consumption.

No. 185.

The MAYOR, Hokitika, to the Chairman and Members of the Local Industries Commission.

GENTLEMEN,—

Town Hall, Hokitika, 10th April, 1880.

I have the honor to state that, on receipt of your circular, steps were taken to prepare the information you desire with regard to the development of local industries in Westland; and I have now the honor of forwarding the report on the subject, prepared by a committee appointed for that purpose, and approved by a meeting of residents interested in local industries, called together to consider the same.

The circumstances connected with a new gold field, and the comparatively young state of this district, have prevented, up to the present time, the development of anything like local manufactures; and this committee have therefore dealt principally with the main industries of the Coast, believing that attention to the fostering of these in the first instance is of principal importance, and that, as these industries progress, the others will follow. We should have been glad of a visit from your Commission.

I have, &c.,

McLEAN W. JACK,
Mayor.

REPORT on the Development of Local Industries, Westland.

Town Hall, Hokitika, 8th April, 1880.

GOLD-PRODUCTION is the main industry of the people, and is therefore the first subject to engage attention. From March, 1865, to January, 1880, inclusive, 2,076,851 ounces, of the value of £8,307,404, were produced, according to the Customs returns, from Westland alone, exclusive of the Grey Valley; and the yield is being not only steadily maintained, but has gradually improved yearly during the past three years. Gold-workings on the beaches along the whole coast-line, from the Teremakau River to Jackson's Bay—a distance of 180 miles—prove that the interior of the country (the greater part of which is even now unexplored) is highly auriferous, as the gold has of course been deposited by the various rivers in the beach-sands. The industry should be encouraged by giving the most liberal possible aid, by way of subsidy to prospecting parties, under the system and regulations now in force, which answer fairly enough if administered and interpreted in a liberal spirit. A leading feature in fostering the gold-mining industry is that of aid to water-race construction. No expenditure, however, should be incurred in connection with water-races without the fullest inquiry as to the facilities for bringing the water on the ground, the reproductive nature of the ground to be worked by the race, and the available means for the removal of tailings. In connection with water-races, sludge-channels and drainage-tunnels will be entitled to mention as works deserving of every possible assistance from State funds. Another valuable means of encouraging the industry, in densely-bushed country such as this, is the construction of tracks to open up the interior, thereby enabling prospecting to be carried on at a moderate cost. Several notable instances might be cited, in which the construction of a road or a bush-track has led to the most important gold-discoveries. The Kumara gold field, the richest alluvial field now being worked in New Zealand, owes its existence to the fact that a road was constructed through the locality; and without that road, the Kumara gold field would probably be unheard-of to this day. Large rewards should be provided for the discoveries of new gold fields. The importance of giving facilities to mining districts, by the introduction of the newest and most suitable machinery and appliances for saving gold, and making such inventions available to the ordinary miner, should not be lost sight of; and boring-rods and drills should be at the disposal of local bodies in mining centres, so that new ground could be speedily and properly tested. A considerable proportion of gold is lost owing to the want of information regarding gold-saving methods and apparatus; and were boring-rods and drills at work in various places, much unnecessary labour and expense would be saved, and the result would be a vast benefit to Westland and to the colony generally.

Silver.—Large sums of money have been expended in the search for silver-lodes, and the indications of a considerable extent of country are such as lead to the belief that considerable and valuable deposits of this metal exist. The recommendations made with regard to prospecting for gold will, of course, apply in the case of parties expending private funds in the search for silver.

Timber.—The timber-lands cover an area of 2,000,000 acres, and comprise the most valuable forests of the various hardwoods, so useful for building and other purposes. The great drawback to the carrying-on of the timber trade hitherto has been the variable condition of the Hokitika bar, and the consequent expense of getting vessels in and out of port. The obvious way of remedying this is by the completion of the harbour works now in progress (and which have already greatly improved the harbour), and the adoption of some means by which the towage of vessels can be reduced to a minimum cost. Large orders for timber-supply are repeatedly declined in consequence of the difficulty of getting the timber exported. The supply is practically unlimited, and the demand is always large; but, owing to the impediments above referred to, the trade is in a languishing condition, instead of being a great source of commercial wealth and giving employment to hundreds of persons. The manufacture of doors and sashes is altogether retarded by the high rate of labour on the Coast.

Coal.—Several coal-seams are known to exist up the Hokitika, the Totara, the Paringa, and Haast Rivers. On the Paringa River a very valuable discovery of coal has just been made. The seam is 8 feet thick, and of very superior quality.