

granted; 19 forfeited; 168 notices of marking-out new claims have been given; 129 claims have been registered; 175 miners' rights have been issued. I have, &c.,

HARRY KENRICK,  
Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

## No. 2.

Mr. Warden KENRICK to the UNDER-SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Thames, 2nd May, 1881.

In furnishing the annual report upon the Hauraki Gold Fields for the year ending 31st March, 1881, it is gratifying to be able to say that the anticipations of a revival in gold-mining contained in my previous report have been realised. For the first nine months of the year the yield of gold was in excess of the previous year, 33,300oz. as against 33,045oz. The falling-off during the quarter ending 31st March last is due to the stoppage of the various batteries in consequence of the deficient supply of water, the long spell of dry weather experienced this season having materially reduced the quantity of water in the county race, from whence the motive power for the batteries is now obtained. This revival has not been confined to a small increase in the quantity of gold produced, but has shown itself in the large area of old ground that has been retaken up in different localities, as also in the large extent of new country opened up for mining by recent discoveries.

Commencing at the northern end of the district, adjoining the Coromandel District, there has been a considerable amount of prospecting done by subsidized parties and individual miners, proving the existence of gold-bearing leaders over a large extent of comparatively untried and unknown country towards the east.

At Tapu Creek (Hastings), where very rich gold has been got in the past, several claims have been taken up during the year. A water-race, some forty chains in length, is being brought in to the battery that has so long been deserted, but which is now being repaired and got ready for use. Stone is being raised in one claim ready to bring down to the battery, and there is every indication that this long-neglected portion of the district will come to the front again and justify the expectations that were formed of it by the rich discoveries made in the early days of the field.

The grant of money made by the Government towards the completion of the road between the Thames and Coromandel will materially assist in making the Tapu Creek District better known. I trust that it will be possible to spare funds sufficient to bridge the Waikawau River during the present year, as it is a very much-needed work, and one that would benefit both the Thames and Coromandel Districts.

At Tararu Creek, further south, recent prospecting has proved the existence of stone apparently in payable quantities. A claim has been taken up with the intention of working in a company. Valuable hematite ore exists in large quantities up this creek, a considerable amount having been raised during the past year. In addition to the valuable paint made from this ore, recent experiments have shown that a large percentage, 75 to 80 per cent., of iron is contained in the ore. Capital is forthcoming to work the discovery on a large scale; but, unfortunately, no title can be given to the ground by the Government. In my previous report I suggested the time had arrived when the agreements made with the Natives should be revised, with the object of obtaining the power to grant licenses to work for other minerals than gold. It would, undoubtedly, be of great advantage to the district—I might say to the colony—that this power should be obtained, for hematite, iron, silver, lead, and coal are known to exist throughout this part of the peninsula; but to all applications for leave to prospect for the same I have been compelled to return the one answer—viz., that on Native lands gold only can be mined for under the existing agreements.

The County Council, during the present winter, purpose spending some £1,400, £700 of which is a subsidy from the vote in aid of gold-fields roads, in making a pack-track along the main range and leading spurs towards Tapu from the Thames, connecting with the beach by tracks down the Tararu and Puru, and other creeks. It is believed that this work will enable ground to be taken up and worked that would not otherwise be done, besides opening much new ground for prospecting.

At the Thames proper some discoveries of importance have been made at the Karaka and Hape Creek, but as the claims are reported upon by the Mining Inspector in detail, it is not necessary for me to say more than that the prospects of this, the centre of the district, are good, but that its future will depend in a great measure upon the thorough prospecting of the deeper levels. The Big Pump Company have, with the aid of contributions from both county and borough authorities and various claims, drained the water in the claims within the area affected by their operations to the 400-foot level, but as yet little or nothing has been done towards prospecting the ground thus rendered available. If this is not soon taken in hand, it is certain that the contributions will fall off, and the opportunity of testing the low levels be lost. There is still a large area of comparatively untried country towards the East Coast known to be gold-bearing, but as yet scarcely visited by the prospectors, the difficulty of access being at present great.

Further south again, towards Puriri, there has been a good deal of prospecting carried on during the year. One subsidized party have reported the discovery of a payable reef upon which they are now working. I have strong hopes that much new ground will be taken up in this locality during the year. Between this place (Puriri) and Tairua, on the East Coast, some old ground has been taken up with very encouraging prospects. Work on a limited scale has always been carried on in the Tairua Ranges, but the inaccessible nature of the country has always limited the area; the extent of gold-bearing country as yet untouched in this locality is very large. The completion of a good road between Puriri and Tairua, on the East Coast, would do much to open up that part of the district to the miner, besides facilitating the existing large traffic between Tairua and the Thames.

The recent census returns show a population of 551 souls in and about Tairua. A bad, at times almost impassable, pack-track is at present the only means of communication these people have with the Thames, their natural outlet.