

the quartz, and in the neighbouring claims no discovery of any moment was made, the Prince of Wales Claim being the only one which may be said to have had a slight show

The Morning Star Claim, situated considerably to the south of the Prospectors, is stated to have found fair gold, but as I have not seen the prospects I am unable to give an opinion.

Ruakaka District, situated about two or three miles north of the Prospectors' claim, is a much more kindly-looking country for mining, containing large bodies of quartz showing a little gold, and which might be made payable if a battery was erected driven by water-power, where large quantities of quartz might be put through at a cheap rate.

A company has been formed and a small battery is being erected, which, within a month or two, will enable the miners to prove the true value of the prospects obtained from their claims.

Rushes of this unfortunate nature are to be deplored, sweeping away, as they do, years' savings of many poor men; not but that there may be good gold in the district, but the nature of the prospecting work, the hard rock to be driven through, and the consequent slow progress that can be made, necessitate the expenditure of much time and money before any adequate returns can be had.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The general prospects of the whole of the fields tend to point to the fact that we shall still have a continuation of mining prosperity.

Although deep mining has not received the attention which should have been devoted to it, a considerable amount of prospecting in the ranges is, however, now carried on, adding to the gold-producing portions of the district.

At Ohinemuri the prospects are much brighter than they have been for some years back.

I am pleased to be able to report that, with one exception, we have been free from serious mining accidents. This one happened at the Moanataiari Mine, to a man named John McGregor, who arrived at the mine too late to accompany the others who relieved shift at 3 p.m.; he had therefore to descend the shaft by the ladders, as the engine is stopped at that hour. It is very difficult to explain how the accident could have happened, as the ladder is a very safe one. The supposition is that his candle went out, and he thought he had reached the level when he was on a stage ten feet above it, and he must have fallen this short distance and been killed.

Another accident of a less serious nature occurred in the Waiotahi Mine to two miners named David Downes and Edwin Copeland; they were engaged in replacing a prop which had been blown out by a shot, when a portion of the wall fell and rolled over on them before they could get away

I have, &c.,

JAMES M. McLAREN,
Mining Inspector.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

MARLBOROUGH GOLD FIELDS.

No. 4.

Mr. Warden ALLEN to the UNDER-SECRETARY for Gold Fields.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Picton, 31st March, 1881.

I have the honor to forward you my annual report and returns for year ended 31st March, 1881. The returns will show an increase in numbers of miners employed in my district, and in works and appliances for gold-mining purposes. The revenue collected has exceeded my last year's estimate, and a larger amount of gold has been found. Still, my report must principally consist of great expectations unrealized in the past, and of problems to be solved in the future. I briefly as possible report as follows:—

Pelorus Mining District (known as the Wakamarina Gold Field).—The population and yield of gold will compare favourably with the previous year. Although miners have been passing to and fro between Wakamarina and Wairau Valley, I do not think that the limited population in this district has decreased during the past year. In my last report I mentioned a movement to establish companies for working claims in this district. I am still of the opinion that the formation of *bona fide* companies is the only means of profitably working this gold field. The following companies have been at work during the past year: A small company known as Mitchell and party have been engaged sluicing at the Forks. A second small company of masters without men, known as the Gorge Company, started with atmospheric cylinders to work the bed of the Wakamarina River. And a third company, known as the Wakamarina Alluvial Hydraulic Sluicing Company, have commenced extensive preparations for working on Arthur's Terrace. During the past year Mitchell and party have amply repaid themselves for their time and labour expended on their claim; and, although a very unnecessary degree of caution is generally adopted by miners in describing the result of their labours, this party acknowledge that they have done well. During the present dry season the members of this company can afford to take well-earned relaxation, their claim being at present protected for want of water. With regard to the Atmospheric Company, with such a superfluity of managers, the result could not long remain a matter of doubt. The cylinders and apparatus have for some time past been left unused on the spot where last deposited, and are likely to remain there until better arrangements are made. One of the managers or directors, on speaking to me some time ago about the prospects of the company, suggested the advisability of selling the plant for what it would fetch. I am inclined to think that, even under good management, the plan of working by atmospheric cylinders would not be found to answer in rocky gorges of rivers. The apparatus is no doubt adapted for prospecting river beds, and there is ample room in the Wakamarina River for such a prospecting company to work with reasonable probability of success. There is yet a large quantity of gold to be obtained from the bed of this river.

The Wakamarina Alluvial Hydraulic Sluicing Company.—This company have not yet completed their preliminary operations. As I hope during the present year that I may have to report their successes, I would suggest an abbreviation of the title. During the past year this company has been