

There are several prospecting licenses issued, and a few mineral leases for minerals other than gold, of which two for silver are said to have fair prospects. The manufacture of hematite paint has now assumed the character of a regular and permanent industry. The coal seams at West Wanganui, which for some time were worked by a Wellington company who went into liquidation, have since been started by another company, who have put down test borings; they have gone through two seams of 2 feet and 3 feet respectively, and are now pushing on for the main seam, which is reckoned to be 6 feet.

I cannot better conclude my report than by repeating my remark at the commencement, "That although at present there is not a large amount of gold getting, there is a singular activity and hopefulness apparent amongst those engaged in this industry."

I have, &c.,

WM. GIBBS,
Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 8.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Westport, April 1882.

I have the honor to forward herewith the statistical returns for the year ending the 31st March, and to submit the following general report on that portion of the Buller District under my control:—

The district is divided into three sub-districts—viz.: (1.) Westport, taking in Addison's Flat, Buller Road, Northern Terraces, Waimangaroa, Mokihinui, and Karamea. (2.) Charleston, taking in Croninville, Brighton, Fox's River, to the Razorback. (3.) Lyell, which includes Welchman's, New Creek, Zala Town, Manuka Flat, Central and Upper Buller, Hampden, Matakītaki, Glenroy, and Maruia.

Receivers of gold revenue are stationed at the Townships of Westport, Charleston, and Lyell. Sittings of the Courts have been held at each place at regular intervals. The officer in charge at Lyell visits Hampden, distant twenty-four miles from Lyell, twice a month; and sittings of the Courts have during the past year been held regularly every alternate month. This Court has been a source of great convenience to the miners in the Upper Buller and Matakītaki, and has saved them many a weary tramp to the Lyell.

WESTPORT SUB-DISTRICT.

Alluvial mining has been carried on during the past twelve months at Addison's Flat, Northern Terraces, Buller River, Waimangaroa, Mokihinui, and Karamea, with fair average returns, and in some instances good yields have been obtained. A few parties are located along the sea beaches between Westport and Mokihinui working the black sand. No new discoveries in alluvial workings have been made.

During the summer months several parties went out prospecting for quartz reefs on the ranges between the Mokihinui and Buller Rivers. About four months ago good gold-bearing quartz was obtained up the Mokihinui, near the old Haleyon Claim, and also at Waimangaroa and Cascade Creek, some ten miles up the Buller River. A rush at once set in, which resulted in thirty-six gold-mining leases being applied for—namely, Mokihinui, 10 leases; Waimangaroa, 16; and Cascade Creek, 10. Of these eight leases have been surveyed and granted. Several of the leases applied for at Waimangaroa are situate upon the coal leases and cannot be granted until the Government make arrangements with the present lessees. The rest of the applications have been adjourned for the completion of the surveys.

CHARLESTON SUB-DISTRICT.

No payable quartz reefs have up to the present time been found in this portion of the district. Mining in alluvial ground has been steadily pursued with fair results wherever water was available on the terraces and low flats adjoining the creeks and gullies.

During heavy gales on the coast the deposit of grey sand on the sea beaches is swept away, and a thick layer of black sand containing a large percentage of fine gold is left exposed, and when washed out yields from 10s. to 25s. per day. If water is not available the black sand is carefully gathered up and carried up on the bank out of the reach of the tide. The greater portion of these claims have been covered up with grey sand for several months, but the owners are very careful in keeping them protected. Two double area claims on the Nine-mile Beach, with water-race and all appliances in connection therewith, were sold for £1,000 about three months ago.

The workings at Croninville have been steadily maintained during the year. Some of the claims have proved unremunerative, and been abandoned after the expenditure of a considerable amount of time and labour in opening up the ground. Great energy and skill have been displayed by the miners in working their claims, the construction of tunnels, and the methods adopted for saving the gold. Water is supplied from two large water-races brought in from the head of the Totara River, about six or seven miles above Croninville, and several large reservoirs have been constructed on the flats for the storage of the surplus and night water. The enormous output of tailings from the claims into the Totara River is gradually filling up the bed of the river, so much so that steps have been taken by the agricultural lessees on the river below the workings to protect their interests. Mr. Costello has taken proceedings in the Supreme Court, which will eventually put a stop to all the workings at Croninville, unless the rights of the agricultural lessees are bought up and cancelled.

The "fly catchers" are making fair wages with the numerous tables set in the creeks and tail-races for saving the fine gold which escapes from the workings on the various terraces. The profit derived from these works is often reduced considerably by the injury done to the tables during floods.