

At St. Bathans and Vinegar Hill work is being carried on energetically and on a large scale. Several new mining leases and special claims have been granted during the year containing large areas of ground.

At Blackstone Hill nothing further has been done on the reefs: good stone has been found, but no application yet made for a mining lease. Settlement on the land open for selection still goes on, and every day some new farm is fenced and broken up. Heavy crops have been anticipated from the unusual moisture of the season, but fears are now entertained that they will not prove so good, the wet weather continuing far into the season. Prices for farm produce have not ruled quite so high as last year.

The new agricultural leases taken up during the year represent an area of 3,157 acres 3 roods, and the deferred-payment selections during the same period amount to 3,568 acres 1 rood 2 perches. Some 1,825 acres 3 roods 21 perches held under agricultural lease have been converted into freehold, and four leases have been exchanged for deferred-payment licenses. The total area held at the 31st March under agricultural lease is 7,771 acres 1 rood 27 perches, and on deferred-payments 31,350 acres 3 roods 24 perches, exclusive of pastoral deferred-payment lands. The yield of gold for the year is estimated at 14,600oz., of the value of £54,750, a goodly increase on last year's yield. The total revenue from all sources has been as follows: Gold revenue, including rents on mining and agricultural leases, £2,109 19s. 6d.; rents on deferred-payment, £2,653 6s. 11d. This shows a decrease as compared with last year. In addition to the cases in the Warden's Court, there have been heard 346 applications for mining privileges, 13 applications for gold-mining leases, and 16 for agricultural leases: of these 42 were opposed, and the objections as usual were in many cases very lengthy.

I have, &c.,

JOHN S. HICKSON,  
Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

#### No. 14.

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

SIR,—

Lawrence, 22nd May, 1884.

I have the honour to forward herewith report and statistics of the Tuapeka Division of the Otago Gold Field, for the period ending the 31st March last.

There is absolutely nothing new to report upon for the past year, but it is satisfactory to note that the yield of gold is within a few ounces of last year's estimate.

The cement-workings at Bluespur and Weatherston's still continue, with fair success.

The Tuapeka Prospecting Company have struck the cement in their lease at Weatherston's, which is doubtless the same run as that being worked by the Weatherston's Cement Company.

The Gabriel's Gully Sluicing Company continue working, with improved prospects as they get higher up the gully and nearer their solid ground: though I understand they have not paid a dividend, they have made a substantial reduction in their overdraft.

At Waitahuna there is nothing to report of interest. The Chinese seem to be the most successful workers. A few of the residents have started a prospecting company, and have taken up old cement leases, but have not had time to develop their ground.

At Waipori there is no change. The "Modern Maori," "Little Maud," and "Cosmopolitan" Companies are at work and looking well, employing about thirty men. The "Victory" Company have ceased working for the present. About fifty Europeans and a hundred Chinese are working alluvial ground. The copper and antimony mines are not at work.

The yield of gold for the year ending the 31st March, 1884, is estimated at 19,000oz., being nearly up to last year's estimate, and may be roughly described as follows: Alluvial, 12,150oz.; cement, 6,150oz.; quartz, 700oz.

There are two dredges at work on the Clutha River, near the Beaumont, that have been yielding good wages. During the year 116 acres have been taken up as extended claims. Settlement is steadily advancing in the district. Under the various regulations relating to the granting of agricultural leases, commencing with the ten-acre system, there have been taken up about 68,000 acres. After deducting, say, 9,000 acres, the leases of which have been cancelled from time to time, and the 3,600 acres representing the leases now existing, about 50,900 acres have been made freehold; the balance, 4,500 acres, remaining is represented by deferred-payment exchange licenses. The success of the deferred-payment system is demonstrated by the fact that about 37,000 acres have been taken up as ordinary deferred payments, and about an equal area as pastoral deferred payments. About 3,600 acres of the latter have been cancelled for non-fulfilment of conditions. Of the ordinary deferred payments, thirty-nine lessees, with an area of 6,244 acres, have capitalized their holdings under "The Land Act, 1882."

At Waikaia mining is almost an industry of the past, except amongst the Chinese, who have command of most of the available water. Settlement is, however, progressing, the Commissioners of Education Reserves having thrown open land under the deferred-payment and perpetual-lease systems, and about 10,000 acres have been taken up and are being settled on; but, as a large area is included in the Waimea Plains Railway District, I fear settlement will be retarded by the heavy rate struck of 3s. 4d. on the annual value.

I have, &c.,

J. NUGENT WOOD,  
Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

#### No. 15.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Oamaru, 5th April, 1884.

I have the honour to forward herewith the usual statistical returns in respect of the district under my charge as Warden for the year ending 31st March, 1884.