

In Rainy Creek the *Inkermann Company* have kept their 30-head battery well employed. About 40 men are at work in and about the claim. Stone from lower level working upwards has proved of higher value than in the upper level. Permanent works are in hand for opening up other levels. A shaft has recently been commenced, it is proposed to sink it 150ft. The crushings to date have given a good profit, enabling the company to pay off a considerable portion of the debt incurred in the erection of the machinery, so that when the debt has been extinguished dividends may be expected.

During the summer and autumn there was oftentimes a great scarcity of water, and the progress of the field was much retarded in consequence.

The diamond drill purchased some two years ago by the Inangahua Council, has unfortunately not been put to any use up to the present time. I believe the Picton Borough Council, having been given the interest the Government had in the drill, have asked the Council here what sum they will take for their share. A number of people are of opinion that the drill should not be sold, but used in prospecting the district.

Professor Black visited Reefton recently and delivered several lectures, in which the community took a lively interest. Testing classes have been formed, and are now only awaiting information from the professor as to the probable cost of the outfit.

Taking all things into consideration, I think the prospects of this field are much brighter, and evidence of this is not wanting. There is every reason to believe that there will be a number of claims crushing in the course of two or three months, which have been idle for a long time. Considerable attention is being drawn to the *Eureka*, as should that claim strike the *Welcome* reef it cannot but be attended with beneficial results, and will impart new life to mining in the locality. Nobody can deny that the shareholders are deserving of success.

I have, &c.,

FRANK BIRD,
Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

WESTLAND GOLD FIELDS.

No. 9.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Greymouth, 14th May, 1885.

I have the honour to forward the following general report on the condition of the mining districts under my charge during the past financial year.

The statistical returns for the same period, called for by you, have already been furnished.

I have not had the advantage of a personal observation of affairs here, except during the last quarter of the year, when I relieved Mr. Warden Stratford of the charge.

Barrytown.—The mining population of this place and the several creeks between it and Greymouth, and again north to Razorback, has remained at decreased numbers as appeared in last year's report. No new ground has been discovered, or if so reported, and no increased amount of water to work that occupied, has been applied for to any extent worthy of note, still there does not appear to have been any diminution of numbers, and a certain amount of steady work, but for very small results, has been done. The bridge which my predecessor referred to as about to be built over the Grey River, between Cobden and Greymouth, and which when completed he hoped would give an impetus to this portion of the district, has unfortunately been seriously damaged when near completion, by a high flood in the month of January, and the work has not yet been resumed. A track which is under construction by the county between Barrytown and Razorback, will open up a considerable tract of country which is at present unoccupied and well worth prospecting, and I think the future prospects of this portion, and indeed the whole of the district, depends greatly on such aids. The whole country being dense bush, the means of conveying provisions at present are very scanty; tracts suitable for pack-horses up the sides of creeks would be of great assistance to prospectors. I have no doubt that the Cobden bridge will greatly promote mining enterprise in that portion of the district within the provincial District of Nelson, extending northward by the coast.

South Beach, &c.—In this direction towards the Teramakau, and at Rutherglen and Welshman's, some but very unimportant mining operations continue, giving employment to about the same number of Europeans and Chinese as last year, about one hundred and fifty.

Marsden.—In this locality little has been done, though I have reason to believe that there may be good untried ground in the neighbourhood. An application was made to me a little time since for a "prospecting area" by a miner who believes in the existence of a deep lead of gold not far from Marsden, and the prospecting being necessarily of an expensive nature—long tunnels occupying much time and labour to construct—the applicant was desirous of obtaining the "prospecting area" within which he might prosecute his search and know the ground was secured to him. Unfortunately this can only be granted "upon the application of any persons forming a party of not less than four;" the regulation might be altered with advantage. I have known frequent instances of its checking prospecting adventure; a miner does not always care to take in three other partners.

At *Irishman's*, in this neighbourhood, a prospecting party in the same description of ground obtained some pecuniary assistance from the County Council, and by its means were encouraged, if not solely enabled, to continue work until a short time since they found what they hope will eventually realize their expectations. Two or three other claims have been taken up in double areas, and I make no doubt, as the labor and time required to be expended in reaching the auriferous dirt in such a position as to work it successfully, is so great that the prospectors have some substantial earnest for future success to inspire them. If these claims prove successful, a considerable area of the same class of ground will be opened up.