

Cassius shaft by reason of the danger of tapping a large quantity of water, and of the general risks attending operations in old workings. Nevertheless, the question of the existence of a rich deposit at that level cannot be considered to have been determined in the negative until the spot where it is said to have been actually found in former years has been searched, and it may be presumed that the stopping of the pump and driving operations in this claim—the immediate cause of which seems to have been a difference with the workmen—will prove to be only temporary.

The claim of the same company at Jones's Flat, commonly known as the "Elevator Claim," is in active work. The mode of working this claim, which is lighted by electricity, is ingenious and interesting, and I believe there is good reason to expect that it will turn out a good and profitable property. The Ross United Company has also lately acquired the claim known as the Prince of Wales, but this ground can hardly be worked to advantage until water is brought to it by a costly head-race.

The Mont D'Or claim is still in active work.

The Donnelly's Creek Company has completed the drainage tail-race to the claim, which has proved a work of much labour and expense, and it may be expected that this ground will shortly be tried.

In my last report I mentioned the discovery of some auriferous quartz at Cedar Creek near Ross. The discovery proved at all events sufficiently specious to cause a good deal of excitement, and some 40 gold mining leases were shortly applied for, but nothing can yet be definitely stated about the real value of the ground. Some driving and some experimental crushing of stone are being carried on, but without more capital than seems to be at present available for the purpose no important results can be expected, and until some of the other heavy ventures in the neighborhood have proved successful, there will be difficulty in obtaining money for new speculations.

I regret that the general tenor of my report on the mining operations at Ross are of a much less favorable character than it seemed twelve months ago reasonable to hope. But it must not be forgotten that some very useful work has been done which can scarcely fail to exercise a permanently beneficial effect upon Mining operations in that neighborhood. For, setting aside all question of very deep sinking, there can be no question that the main drainage tunnel of the Ross United Company will enable a large quantity of ground to be worked, to double the depth that was before possible. It must be remembered that before the formation of the Ross Flat Company the project of bringing in a drainage tunnel had been set on foot by the Ross Municipality for the purpose of allowing the flat to be worked to a greater depth, and it was generally recognised that this of itself would be a great boon to the mining industry.

That tunnel is now made, but the disappointment of the perhaps extravagant hopes that were entertained regarding the deeper strata is at present rather blinding people to the real gain which the district has undoubtedly acquired by the possibility of working a large extent of land formerly unworkable.

Of this gain the present working of the Elevator claim is a sufficient proof, and the Prince of Wales, whenever water is available, will illustrate the same thing. In fact I see no reason why the large area of ground held by the Company should not be profitably worked, even though the worst supposition should turn out to be true and they should be obliged to relinquish all that is below the level of the tunnel.

Scientific Lectures.—The miners and other residents in the district have given a warm welcome to Professor Black and Mr. Montgomery, who have succeeded in arousing an enthusiastic interest in the chemistry of metals and of mining. The only drawback attending this little scientific incursion among us is the scanty time at the disposal of the lecturers and the impossibility of novices in chemistry learning in the time one-half of what Professor Black had to tell them. But Professor Black did all that scientific enthusiasm, thorough knowledge of the subject, and a great power of lucidly setting it forth could accomplish; and both he and Mr. Montgomery really achieved a wonderful success in imparting so much information and exciting so much interest in the limited time at their disposal. At Kumara and other places classes for study are projected; and it may be hoped that, if Professor Black comes again next year, he may find that some scientific seed has fallen upon good ground.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Gold Fields Department, Wellington.

J. GILES.

No. 11.

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

SIR,—

Jackson's Bay, 18th May, 1885.

I have the honour to enclose herewith goldfields' returns for the twelvemonth ended 31st March, 1885; also general report on the district under my charge for the same period.

OKARITA SUB-DISTRICT.

Mining operations in this district are entirely confined to alluvial workings—viz., terrace-workings at and around Lake Maparika, black-sand workings on the various sea beaches, and creek and river-bed workings on the Waiho, Cook's, and other rivers and creeks in the district. Small wages are being made by most of the miners. During the past year no new discoveries have been made, and, although there is no lack of untried ground, I have heard of one party only who has been prospecting about the head waters of the Waiho, where a considerable quantity of coarse gold was obtained a couple of years ago. However, the efforts of this party have not resulted in anything tangible so far. This district having been assigned to me very recently I refrain from saying anything more until I am better acquainted with its capabilities and requirements.