

JACKSON'S BAY SUB-DISTRICT.

Gold-mining in this district is also confined to alluvial workings. Some of the beach claims are paying remarkably well, and most of the men at work are making average wages. Payable terrace workings have been opened on the Abbey Rock Ranges, to which a pack track from the main south road is now being constructed. This will give easy access to this heretofore inaccessible place, and no doubt by the time the tract is finished the population will be largely increased. Bullock Creek—another part of the same range—continues to give profitable employment to a number of men. On the Haast Beach there are about twenty men at work. Two large tail races have been brought in at half-tide level from the sea beach to the back lead to drain the ground. This involved a large expenditure of both time and money, as the cuttings were very heavy. However, the work has been completed in a substantial manner, and the men are now at work opening up their claims. The ground is not rich, but with the improved and systematic method of working adopted, they expect to make average wages. At Barn Bay and Gorge River gold has been found in payable quantities, and several parties are making arrangements to commence work in that locality. Two parties are already at work at Barn Bay, where they have secured valuable water-rights in connection with their claims. About three miles up the Gorge River a party have prospected and taken up a claim on the river, excellent prospects were obtained, and they purpose turning the river so as to work the ground to greater advantage. The block of country from Barn Bay on the north to Big Bay on the south, is auriferous throughout, and is one of the most promising blocks of untried country on the Coast. Hitherto its extreme inaccessibility has kept it a *terra incognita* to all but the most venturesome spirits, who, from time to time on their return, called attention to its value as a likely goldfield. The recent visit of Mr. Mueller, Chief Surveyor to this district, and his report thereon, together with information obtained from those connected with the Survey Department, all go to confirm the often repeated assertion made by the late Andrew Williamson of Big Bay, that this was one of the most valuable mineral districts in the Middle Island. So far, the bar to the opening of this promising piece of country has been, and is, the want of roads. Last year a beginning was made in the right direction, a rough pack track having been constructed from Jackson's Bay to Carmichael's Creek, on the Cascade Plateau, but, to be of any service, it must be continued on the line of the main south road as far as the Cascade Valley, a distance of eight or nine miles, before goods can be packed to where the men are at work, or be of any service in opening up the district. Discoveries of minerals other than gold are frequently reported, but unless where the ores can be traced to where they occur *in situ*, they are only valuable as indicating the presence of the metals in the district. In the above connection a valuable series of seams of bituminous coal, equal to that found at Greymouth, occurs in the bald hills near the Haast. This deposit, taken in connection with the discovery of copper ore, "yellow sulphide," in the Okuro-Matakataka range, in the immediate neighborhood, is of great importance, as here we have all the requirements (such as timber, limestone, coal, and an ore giving 24 to 26 per cent. of copper, as tested by Professor Black) necessary for the successful launching of an extensive mining industry. Three mining leases have been surveyed and granted on the copper lode. This deposit occurs in the metamorphic slate, and has been traced for a long distance. The recent discovery of copper in the serpentine and olivine formations of the Cascade range, is of importance as showing the occurrence of this metal in a somewhat unusual form, viz., that of very minute grains of native copper thickly distributed through the rock, a species of talc. The separation of this metal from its matrix would be simply mechanical, and as the rock is soft, a comparatively easy matter. This irruptive and mineral belt, extending as it does to the head of Lake Wakatipu, gives promise of such important mineral discoveries as would warrant the Government in opening it up by the immediate construction of a pack track (on the line of the main south road, as indicated on the valuable map attached to Mr. Mueller's report) from the Cascade Plateau to the head of the lake. This would give prospectors facilities for examining the country, and enable them to bring their tools and stores within reach of their operations. With a passable pack track through this block, you can dispense with paid prospecting parties, for, with ordinary facilities for getting into the country, there are plenty of men ready and willing to do the rest. Applications for leases are before the Land Board in Hokitika in connection with the discovery of a deposit of plumbago, south of Jackson's Bay, trial tests from which are considered favorable. Rich specimens of galena and samples of platinum have been brought to this office during the year, but as the source from whence they are derived has not yet been found, I refrain from further remarks at present. Complaints continue to be made as to the infrequency of our mail service. Our regular mail comes every two months only. An extension of the weekly mail from the head of Lake Wanaka to Jackson's Bay, or that of the Paringa to the same place, would be of great advantage to the district.

I have, &c.,

D. MACFARLANE,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 12.

Mr. Warden HICKSON to the UNDER SECRETARY for GOLD FIELDS.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Clyde, 16th May, 1885.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual report and statistics for the several mining districts under my charge.

In alluvial mining there has been some considerable stir at Mount Cruffel, on the Pisa Range, situated about ten miles from Pembroke and thirty-six miles from Cromwell, where, previous to the fall of snow on the 29th April last, there were about fifty miners employed, some of whom were doing remarkably well. The quality of the gold is not so good as in other portions of the goldfield, being