

At *Kyeburn* and the *Burster* the gold miners have had a very good season, and the coal miners still continue to turn out large quantities of coal.

At *Hyde* and *Macraes* work is carried on steadily, but with little, if any, perceptible improvement on last year.

At *Hamilton* and *Lowburn* mining is also being continued, and, although on a small scale, the results have been very satisfactory.

At the *Serpentine* very little is being done, a few parties of Chinese being the only workers.

At *St. Bathans* and *Vinegar Hill* work is being carried on vigorously, especially at the latter place, where mining is prosecuted on a large scale, and in the most approved style, by means of a quantity of machinery and plant, most of which has been erected at considerable expense.

At *Blackstone Hill* mining is almost at a complete standstill, there being only one claim working.

Quartz Reefing.—Last November a small company (under the name of the “*Otago Central Gold Mining Co., Ltd.*”) was formed in Naseby, embracing in its share list shareholders residing in different parts of the Colony, for the purpose of working the quartz reefs at Rough Ridge, a spur running north and south, about fourteen miles distant from Naseby.

For the last twenty years attempts have, from time to time, been made to work these reefs to advantage, but, while in several cases handsome yields have been obtained, in many instances as high as 3oz. to the ton, circumstances of some kind cropped up and ultimately militated against further success to such an extent that the companies rapidly drifted into liquidation. Quartz reefing has for some years past, been carried on in a desultory manner in this locality, and with varying success, although the quartz has been raised, not by companies, but by reefers of comparatively small means. The Ridge is a perfect network of reefs, leaders, and lodes, ranging in size from 10in. to four and five feet. The yields maintain a general average of between $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to 3ozs. per ton. Large quantities of foreign minerals accompanying the gold, and these have of course a very considerable effect on the yield.

It is reckoned that if efficient appliances were at hand for coping with and destroying the power of the sulphides over the gold, the stone that generally returns from 2oz. to 3oz. per ton would, under an improved process, yield as much as 6ozs. and 7ozs., and in some cases even more. Since the Otago Central Company has been in existence much activity has been displayed in its management. During six months a tunnel, 6ft. high, and 5ft. wide, has been driven a distance of 300ft. through hard blue rock, at a cost to the Company of 26s. per foot, and even at this price the contractors made first class wages. In addition, two air-shafts have been sunk through rock, and cross-drives put in from the tunnel, 50ft. and 100ft. respectively. Much other necessary work has also been done. Some short time since a large body of water was met with, in driving along the reef, which necessitated the stoppage of further driving in that direction for some weeks.

I understand that the work has just been recommenced, and although it is difficult to prognosticate results where quartz-reefs are concerned, it seems probable that the operations of the Company will be attended with success. But even if such should not be the case it will by no means thus be proved that the field is not a payable one. In fact it has been proved that it is so, but that the latest improved appliances, and the best management obtainable, are necessary to develop its manifold resources to even an ordinary limit. The field is certainly worthy of a report by a Government Geologist, and I understand that efforts have already been made to get this done.

On the summit of the Rough Ridge, some few miles south of the Otago Central Mine, lies the Garibaldi Diggings, from whence some very rich yields have been taken in times past, but there has always been a lack of water, which has usually to be stored, always an expensive operation. The shallow ground has been worked by means of sluicing, but the auriferous deposits are becoming deeper, necessitating heavy expenditure in constructing deep tail races through hard metamorphic rock. An attempt is now being made to do this, and it may be some time before the result can be made known. The ore is all heavy reef gold, and cannot have travelled far, as its surface has not been much abraded by the action of water. In fact reefs have been discovered in sluicing, and this is further proof that they are not confined to one particular part of the range.

Settlement on the Crown lands goes on steadily, a large number of areas having been taken up during the year.

I understand that the statistics of the District have already been forwarded from the Naseby office.

I have, &c.,

JOHN S. HICKSON,
Warden.

No. 15.

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

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Laurence, 7th May, 1885.

I have the honour to transmit herewith the annual report and statistical returns from the Tuapeka and Waikaia districts, which have been under my charge since the 1st January last, but owing to the short time I have been in charge I have not been able to make myself so conversant with the various mining centres and other outlying localities in this extensive district as I would have wished before furnishing my report.

There have been no new rushes or discoveries of fresh leads during the past year of any importance.

At the Blue Spur the amount of work done in the various claims has considerably decreased, when compared with that of former years, still the prospects in most of these claims are considered very rich, especially if the claims can be worked by the new method of hydraulic sluicing known as Perry's process.