

Beach, and Cook's River that found on Gillespie's Beach. Indeed, all the rivers southward have been the means of bringing down large quantities of gold from time to time, and still continue to do so; but the country inland being precipitous, and at a high elevation, difficult of access, and the obstacles in the way of getting provisions, have prevented this part of the country from being yet properly explored.

HYDRAULIC SLUICING.

The improvements in hydraulic sluicing appliances of late years have enabled ground to be worked which in former years was considered valueless, owing to there being no fall to sluice it away by the ordinary method; such ground is now worked on the hydraulic elevating principle. This system was first introduced by Mr. J. R. Perry to work the tailings in the bed of Gabriel's Gully, about nine years ago, but it was used in California several years before. Since its introduction this system has gradually come into use, until it is now generally adopted for working the low-lying lands where fall cannot be obtained to sluice the ground in the ordinary manner.

WEST COAST.

On the West Coast the principal fields where hydraulic sluicing is carried on are Addison's Flat, Croninville, Charleston, the Grey Valley, Kumara, Waimea, and Stafford, but the largest population employed at this system of mining is at Kumara. The Kumara goldfield has been opened for about fifteen years, an average of about six hundred miners having been employed on it during that period, while the area of auriferous drifts does not exceed 2,100 acres, of which not more than about 550 acres have been partially worked. From this small area gold to the value of about £1,100,000 has been obtained, and at the present time there is no telling the extent of riches lying buried underneath the false bottom on which most of the claims have been worked. The ground is held in comparatively small claims, so closely joined on to each other, that whilst the upper levels continue to pay the claim-holders for working, they are indifferent about testing the ground underneath the false bottom, but no doubt the time will come when prospecting-shafts and adit-levels will be constructed which will probably reveal richer treasures than have been heretofore discovered.

The land on the West Coast within the area of the selection by the Midland Railway Company, in which gold-workings are situate, will be resumed in blocks, in accordance with the conditions of the company's contract, up to an area of 250,000 acres, and the balance of the 750,000 acres, proposed to be reserved for mining purposes, will be taken from time to time as required.

OTAGO.

In Otago there is a large extent of country covered with auriferous drifts, some of which contain rich deposits of gold. There is scarcely a valley or bed of a stream falling into the Clutha that does not contain alluvial drifts payable for working with a good supply of water. It may be said that the number of men who can be profitably employed in hydraulic mining is limited by the quantity of water that can be diverted from its original source to command the ground at a sufficient elevation to carry on sluicing operations advantageously. When we see the extent of drift terraces along the valleys of the Molyneux, Manuherikia, Kawarau, and Shotover Rivers, it cannot be said that alluvial gold-mining is exhausted. Hundreds of years will pass away, and ground will then be found payable for working. The rich deposits of gold recently discovered in the Island Block Company's property show that, although 30 years have elapsed since gold was first discovered in Otago, and thousands of people have walked over the ground, it was never, until a few years ago, considered of any value. It was only after the introduction of the hydraulic elevator, at Gabriel's Gully, that it dawned on men that the Clutha Valley could be worked on a similar system; but, unfortunately, before this time came, a large extent of highly auriferous land in this valley had been disposed of by the Crown to private individuals for a mere trifle in comparison to its intrinsic value. The Island Block Company acquired a certain area of land in the Clutha Valley from the original purchaser, and have spent about £21,000 in works and hydraulic plant; last year's returns show that the company has very fair prospects of being recompensed for their outlay. Other companies are commencing similar operations in this valley, and one of them—the Hercules—has, within about eighteen months, got back nearly the whole of its outlay. Another of these companies—the Roxburgh Amalgamated—commenced sluicing operations last year. The returns for the period worked show that it is likely to prove a remunerative venture,