

The Johnston's United Mining Company is at present at a standstill, they having obtained protection for all their properties, which expires on the 2nd July next.

The proclamation of the Aorere River as a sludge-channel is being anxiously waited for by a number of persons who intend to take up claims. When the declaration is made, this locality will become one of the most important in the district, as the river is known to be very rich in wash in many parts, and is eminently suitable for dredging.

Coal is being worked at Pakawau, and Taylor and Walker have recently been opening up their coal lease at Puponga.

In conclusion, I may mention that, so far as the Collingwood district is concerned, there are no unemployed. Not only has it found employment for its own population, but a large number of strangers have also found employment.

I have, &c.

WILSON HEAPS, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 5.

Mr. Warden STRATFORD to the UNDER-SECRETARY FOR MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Westport, 18th June, 1897.

I beg to forward herewith goldfields statistics for the past year for the Buller division of my district.

With regard to the gold-mining operations being carried on in this part of the district, I find that there is but little to report upon.

The claims at Addison's and the Northern Terraces, in the immediate vicinity of Westport, which have been continuously worked for more than thirty years, are still giving profitable returns to the respective miners, and, judging from appearances, will continue to do so for many years to come.

A large number of special claims, licensed holdings, and other mining rights have been taken up at Westport during the past year, but, beyond prospecting, little actual work has been done in connection with most of the rights.

The General Exploration Company have a large number of men employed in preliminary works, and the Golden Sand Company are also preparing to work some large cement and black-sand areas at Addison's.

The Britannia Company have driven several prospecting tunnels at Stony Creek, in every one of which gold-bearing quartz has been found. This company is arranging with an English syndicate to work their special claim on an extensive scale.

The Great Republic Company have been engaged in prospecting, and constructing an aerial tramway, battery, and water-races, but crushing has not been started yet.

Some prospecting has been done on the quartz-field at Mokihinui, and auriferous stone has been found on several claims there.

Payable quartz has also been found at Cascade Creek, where two or more parties are engaged in driving prospecting tunnels.

A number of special claims have also been taken up at Karamea and Oparara to work alluvial deposits, and I am informed that prospects considered to be payable have been found on some of these areas.

I admit this is a meagre report, but as I only took charge of the district at the eleventh month of the year, I have been placed at a great disadvantage on that account.

I have, &c.,

H. A. STRATFORD, Warden.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 6.

Mr. Warden STRATFORD to the UNDER-SECRETARY FOR MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Reefton, 4th June, 1897.

I have the honour to forward to you herewith statistical returns for the year ended 31st March last, and submit the following report on the Inangahua portion of the district under my charge for the same period.

In my last report I mentioned that the output for the then coming year would not be so large as the past year, for the reason that the Globe, Progress, and Wealth of Nations Mines, the properties of the Consolidated Goldfields of New Zealand, would not crush stone to any extent, as the company intended devoting all their energies in development works. Results have borne out the correctness of my anticipations.

From the opening of the district up to 31st March last, 684,019 tons of quartz has been crushed, from which 484,393 oz. of gold has been obtained, representing a value of £1,894,792, out of which sum £593,418 has been distributed in dividends. The total amount of alluvial gold raised for the same period is approximately estimated at 131,672 oz., representing a value of £488,016. The total gold-production of the district is, as far as can be ascertained, 616,064 oz., of a value of £2,382,808.

The following table will show the calls made, dividends declared, &c., by the various companies in the district during the year:—