

Shamrock Claim.—(30/7/96) : This claim was inspected, as James Hepburn had his jaw broken by a fall from the face. He was boss of the shift, and had been working at the nozzle, but had gone to remove some stones near the face, and had risked too much. Mr. Kennedy, the manager, was not present at the time, but half an hour before had considered the face quite safe. I requested some loose pieces in the tail-race to be taken down or secured, and some timbering to be done, as the reef was soft and treacherous. Mr. Heise was subsequently appointed manager, and I found the tail-race was attended to; but in opening up a chamber for the hopper a new tail-race to north a miner named Frederick John Erickson was killed, on the 24th November, by a fall of reef. The place was driven too far without timber, nearly a set length, which he had been told to put in; there was a set lying prepared at hand. Ten men in all are employed at this claim, but the prospects of late have not been encouraging.

REEFTON.

A1 Sluicing Claim.—(10/6/96) : This subsidised tunnel is being driven to prospect a small flat between Cronadun and Boatman's, and is now in 589 ft. Air-shafts are sunk as required, so the ventilation is good. (25/10/96) : Now sinking the sixth air-shaft, and the distance in is 845 ft. to the face. These shafts, as well as providing air, serve to prospect the drift overhead. Gold has been met, and I tried some prospects, which turned out very well, but the party considered it not yet proved payable. Shortly afterwards they informed me they considered, after further prospecting, that the drift would pay, so this subsidy has attained its object, and no further payments were made.

GREY VALLEY.

Sulky Gully Water-race.—(29/10/96) : The tunnel through the spur has been completed in all 483 ft. Thirty chains of the race have been cut, and fully a chain of rock-cutting and extra driving has been done, in addition to the main tunnel; so the subsidy has been fully earned.

GENERAL.

Mahakipawa Creek is now deserted compared with former years, but a good few men at date of my last visit, in October, were still making a living working odd corners of the old claims. Most of these have since left for other fields.

In the Westport district mining has received a great impetus by the advent of the General Exploration Company, represented by Messrs. Pielsticker and Dencker. At Lake Rochfort and Christmas Terrace, near Fairdown, extensive works are under weigh for sluicing on a large scale, and employing at present about sixty men.

At the Four-mile they have taken up 260 acres, and negotiations have been going on for the leasing of the Argyle dam and water-races from the County Council.

Near Addison's, at their Bendigo and other claims, some five miles of head-race and a mile of tunnel tail-race are being constructed; and at Waite's *pakihis* contracts have been let for sinking twelve shafts to more fully prospect the ground. These at present employ about forty men, but a hundred more are advertised for, and are expected to be at work shortly.

I have, &c.,

N. D. COCHRANE,
Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 16.

Mr. JOHN GOW, Inspector of Mines, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.
SIR,— Inspector of Mines' Office, Dunedin, 31st March, 1897.

I have the honour to forward the usual annual report on the several mines visited by me during the year ended 31st December, 1896.

DREDGES.

Eureka Dredge, Alexandra.—(1/5/96) : This dredge was being launched at the time of my visit; it is to work the Clutha river-bed where launched, about half a mile above the Alexandra Bridge. Her dimensions are: 80 ft. long; pontoons 9 ft. wide each, and 5 ft. deep. The ladder-way is 4½ ft. wide, and the ladder 53½ ft. long. She is capable of dredging 36 ft. deep from the water-surface. The capacity of buckets is 3 cubic feet. The gold-saving appliances are—cylinder with ½ in. holes, under which there are tables of 48 square feet surface, and boxes 3 ft. wide and 24 ft. long. The engine is compound, of 12-horse power nominal, made by Marshall, of Gainsborough and London, and is greatly admired for its completeness and beautiful finish. The boiler is 12 ft. by 4 ft., and has forty-eight tubes, of 3 in. diameter. The dredge is to be fitted with a tailing elevator 36 ft. long, capable of stacking the tailings 20 ft. above the water-level. There are erected hog-posts, standing 14 ft. above the deck, and having tie-rods extending from the bow ladder frame to the outer end of the tail elevator. The tailing buckets are made to slide on a smooth iron surface on the frame instead of on rollers, as on those ladders first made. It is said the friction is very light. (12/6/96) : Most of the machinery is now fixed in position, and deck-houses to cover the boiler, engine, and winding gear are now in hand. The gold-saving tables are yet to be made, and various other things to be done, which may be finished in about two weeks' time.

Crookson's Dredge, Lowburn.—(16/5/96) : At the time of my visit the dredge was afloat, and the machinery was put in motion for an hour or two, to see if every part was in working-order. The trial proved satisfactory, after which the housing-in had to be completed, and other preparations made to test the dredging plant, which work was to be done by commencing dredging operations a few chains above where the dredge was launched. The object of thoroughly testing all the working-