

the free gold amalgamating with the silver on the plate. In this connection it may be mentioned that Mr. Thomas Samuel, of Westport, has introduced a simple plant, consisting of an Edson pump worked by a small oil-engine, which can be easily moved about on the beaches. The pump may be used in conjunction with either a short run of sluice-boxes and silvered plates, or both.

Alluvial mining on and in the locality of the Buller River above Lyell may be said to be of a promising character. A new company, known as Walker's Maruia Gold-mining Company, has been formed, and intend working an extensive alluvial deposit. The water-supply is estimated to cost £6,000. The operations of the Six-mile Hydraulic Sluicing Company are of a satisfactory character. The Horse Terrace Sluicing Company have completed the installation of a fairly extensive plant and commenced sluicing operations. Several other claims are at work, some of which are reported as being highly profitable. During the year most of the claims suffered more or less damage to their water-races or pipe-lines as a result of the heavy floods which occurred. This feature is one of the risks attendant on alluvial mining, in the West Coast district especially.

During the year some attention has been paid to alluvial mining near Caplestone and elsewhere in Inangahua County, and a few claims opened out, none of the workings being as yet on an extensive scale. Prospecting is also being undertaken, the prospectors being assisted in most cases by Government aid.

In the Grey Valley, alluvial mining, much on the lines of the practice of previous years, is being carried on adjacent to the Grey River and its tributaries, and, apart from dredging, provides employment for considerably over a hundred diggers, among whom the Chinese element is fairly well represented. The localities of Upper Blackball, Healey's Gully, Bell Hill, &c., also provide employment for a number of alluvial miners, and the season's gold-returns were generally profitable. At Maori Gully, Saunders and party have acquired a 20-acre claim, with rights to ten heads of water from New Creek. Race-construction has been commenced. The race, including tunnels and a siphon, will be six miles and a quarter in length. The venture is considered to be one of considerable promise.

The principal claims at Barrytown are owned by Mr. A. McKay, of Greymouth, who recently purchased that formerly held and worked by the Waiwhero Sluicing and Dredging Company. Mr. McKay's holdings and operations are of an extensive character; and for the more efficient working of his Barrytown Claim a scheme for the improvement of the water-supply is commanding attention. One of the characteristic features of the working plant at the principal claims in the locality is the large area of the tables over which the gold-bearing material is passed. A description of that designed by the late Mr. H. W. Young, C.E., and erected for the Waiwhero Sluicing and Dredging Company, at Barrytown, was given and illustrated by drawings and photographs in my report presented during the parliamentary session of 1902.

Mining-work at Kumara, Stafford, Goldsborough, Callaghan's, and the adjacent localities, is referred to in the report of Mr. James Rochfort, manager of the Waimea-Kumara water-races. From this it will be seen that during the financial year—1st April, 1905, to 31st March, 1906—the value of gold won at the several claims supplied by water from these races was £17,117 2s., on an average fifty-nine men being engaged at the several claims. In addition to these, a few men are employed at claims commanded by private water-races.

Shortly after Mr. Alexander Aitken retired from the management of these races I made a general inspection in company with Mr. Rochfort, the present manager, and found the races, pipe-lines, and dams generally in very good order; but the trestle-flumes on the Waimea and Stafford race—which were erected some thirty years ago—are all, in consequence of their age, in very indifferent condition. They have been repaired from time to time, but are now getting almost beyond the possibility of further patching-up; and it is evident that their reconstruction, at a probable cost of some £2,000, will have to be considered in the near future.

Around Hokitika alluvial mining is, with one or two exceptions, conducted on a small scale. Operations have been carried on at Humphrey's Gully on a larger scale than at any of the other claims, but the gold-returns have not as yet equalled expectations, and for the past two or three years the claim has been worked on tribute. Craig's Freehold is also worked by a party of tributers, whose earnings have not been very great. The Minerals Gold-mining Company have done fairly well, the gold obtained enabling all liabilities to be paid off and leaving a substantial credit balance for the year. Some of the miners at Back Creek are reported to be making a good living, and others have been engaged in preliminary works which are expected to open up payable ground.

At Ross, the Mont d'Or Claim continues to pay regular dividends; but the somewhat deficient water-supply of last year was responsible for a reduced output of gold. Prospecting-holes below the present working-bottom have shown that payable returns may be obtained; and in order to work this lower ground to advantage the construction of a low-level tail-race has been commenced. The constructive works in connection with McLeod's Terrace Company's claim are now completed, and sluicing was commenced towards the end of the year. The water-supply was somewhat deficient, and the face will have to be more fully opened out before a fair estimate of the claim's possibilities can be well made. A few small parties who are sluicing in the locality are reported to have obtained good returns of gold when water has been plentiful. Mr. Warden Acheson in his reports offers some comments on the potentialities of mining at Ross.

Further south, alluvial mining in the Waiho district has provided employment for between thirty and forty men, of whom about a dozen are treating the beach-sands near the outlet of the Big Waitaha River and five others the deposits left by floods on the north beach of the Wataroa River. The Waiho Sluicing and Elevating Company employ eight men at their claim.

The reports of Mr. Tennent, Inspector of Mines, and of the Wardens for the Marlborough, Nelson, and West Coast Districts, deal with the industry in greater detail.