

REPORT ON THE GOLD FIELDS

GENERAL REPORT on the Northern portion of the HAURAKI GOLD MINING DISTRICT (COROMANDEL),
Province of Auckland, for the year ended 31st March, 1872.

THE Coromandel Gold Field, although the first discovered in New Zealand, is in all probability the least prospected in the Colony. Although considerable sums of money have been lost in connection with the Mining Companies which have from time to time held auriferous ground in the District of Coromandel, very little of the money so lost has been expended in *bona fide* mining operations, and a large proportion of the little that has been so expended has been spent injudiciously, and with an utter want of system.

The district, even at the present time, is comparatively unprospected, yet the little that has been done is enough to convince any one who has an intimate knowledge of the gold producing districts of Australia and New Zealand that Coromandel will ultimately take a first-class place among them.

Gold was first discovered in Coromandel in 1851, and the alluvial deposits were worked to some extent with different degrees of success until 1854, when the field was almost abandoned as unprofitable. Gold was afterwards discovered in the lodes of the Driving Creek in 1862, and a considerable amount of gold obtained. In 1864, several of the small areas then worked as claims were united into one and taken up by the Kupunga Company, which Company continued to work the ground for about four years, obtaining during that period about £85,000 worth of gold. The insufficiency of the machinery employed, and the brilliant prospects at the Thames, where gold bearing quartz of great richness had been discovered, caused the Coromandel gold field to be again deserted, and the Company referred to was wound up.

A fresh impetus was given to gold mining in Coromandel by the discovery of a valuable reef on the Tokatea Range, 1869, since which time the field has been advancing slowly but surely with the aid of local capital only.

Fresh discoveries have recently been made in the low hills on the shore of Coromandel Harbour, in the township of Wynyardton, in the Tiki District, in the Courthouse Creek, and in the neighbourhood of the old Kupunga Claim, places widely apart from each other, and scattered over a very large extent of country. An English Company has taken up the old Kupunga Company's ground, and is importing powerful machinery from England for the purpose of working the ground systematically. The field is only in its infancy, and none of the mines are yet opened up for carrying on operations on an extensive scale. Coromandel is essentially a reefing district, and its progress will necessarily depend on its favour with the capitalists of this, the neighbouring Colonies, and London. A large amount of capital and labour will be necessary for its full development.

The prospects of Coromandel at the present justify sanguine hopes of the future, and public confidence in its permanent welfare is firm, being founded on the excellent prospects found in the reefs, and the high average yield of gold obtained from crushings. The machinery already erected on the field is, however, inadequate, and this circumstance, together with the fact that many Companies have been formed, more for the purpose of speculation, than from a determination to work the ground, may probably cause periods of depression such as have been frequently felt at the Thames and other quartz mining districts.

A large increase of population has taken place during the past twelve months, and a corresponding improvement in the different townships.

The statistical returns in the accompanying documents are in many instances of an approximate character, no returns having been supplied by the owners of crushing machines, and with regard to population I find it very difficult to form an estimate; the excitement consequent on the rich returns from the ground on the Tokatea Range, the Beach, and Wynyardton, having caused a constant flow of visitors from the Thames and Auckland, who remain some days and leave and again return; the distance between these two places and Coromandel being but from three to four hours by steam vessel. There is, however, a constant attendance of a large number of people interested in the result of the mines, who I should consider would be fairly added to the general population of the district, which I would estimate at about 3000.

In January of the present year the district was proclaimed under "The Gold Mining Districts Act, 1871," and all the new ground taken up has been applied for under its provisions,

The following is a return of quartz crushed, and its yield of gold for the year ending the 31st March, 1872:—

QUARTER ENDING.					TONS CRUSHED.		OUNCES.	
1871.								
April, May, June	...	...	...	...	724	...	2,754	...
September	...	...	...	...	1,059	...	8,008	...
December	...	...	...	...	1,713	...	9,698	...
1872.								
March 31st	...	...	...	...	1,301	...	6,825	...
Total					4,797	...	27,285	...

thus averaging 5ozs. 13dwts. per ton.

Considerable quantities of rich specimens have been crushed in Grahamstown, from which gold to the value of about £3000 has been obtained, which would make the total upwards of 28,000oz.

JACKSON KEDDELL, Warden.

Warden's Office, Coromandel, June 6th, 1872.