

Tairua District.—This district is situated in the centre of the peninsula, about half-way between the Thames and the Ohinemuri Gold Field, partly on the eastern and partly on the western side of the main range, about 2,000 feet above the sea-level. It appeared in the early part of the year as if this portion of the field would be totally deserted; but some parties have started on the original prospecting claim, and also on the Alma ground, on the eastern side of the range, with every prospect of success. On the western side, ground near the late Brothers' Claim has been occupied under the name of the Phoenix. Crushing has been carried on constantly with a small four-stamper battery with very fair results.

OHINEMURI.

Waitekauri District.—The principal operations carried on in this district have been in the Waitekauri Company's ground. Owing to the broken character of the reef between the surface and No. 1 level, at a depth of 170 feet, the company let this portion under tribute. The returns received by the tributers have averaged from £4 10s. to £5 per man per week, and doubtless would have been greater had crushing been carried on continuously through the summer. Owing to the exceptionally dry season there was only sufficient water to drive half the battery; frequently not more than ten stampers could be employed, and occasionally crushing was entirely suspended. Under these circumstances only the small and richer portions of the reef were taken out, the body of the reef being left for more favourable opportunity. The company's own operations were carried on with the view of more fully developing the mine at a greater depth. Two drives have been put in at lower levels, the first being 90 feet below the 170-foot level, and known as the 260-foot level. The second is known as the 420-foot level, and is 160 feet lower. The tunnel at the 260-foot level has been driven a total distance of 1,170 feet, and the company will in a short time be prepared to open out and develop the reef on this level. A winze has also been sunk on the reef from the 170-foot to the 260-foot level, the prospects in which are quite equal to those found in the upper workings.

The tunnel at the 420-foot level is now being proceeded with. Its present length is about 900 feet, but a further distance of from 500 to 600 feet will yet have to be driven before the main reef is cut. In making this tunnel a new lode has been intersected showing gold, and which from its present appearance will, when opened out, prove payable, and very much enhance the value of the company's property.

The quartz is crushed by a forty-stamper battery belonging to the company, situated at the foot of the hill, on a branch of the Waitekauri Creek, and is driven by means of a large over-shot wheel. The quartz is conveyed thither from the hills by a tramway more than a mile long, which is, where practicable, self-acting.

With the exception of what is being done by some prospecting parties, the only other mining carried on in this locality is on the Welcome and Young New Zealand Claims, which are situated on the hills about a mile southwards from the Waitekauri Mine, and are connected with the tramway of the latter by means of a tramway a mile and half long, carried round the contour of the country. This gives a total length of two and a half miles of tramway constructed in this district, carried through dense bush and over a very broken and hilly country. These two claims have lately amalgamated under the name of the Welcome Extended, which is being worked by tributers, and is proving remunerative to all concerned. The lodes operated on are small, and have the appearance of being offshoots from a large reef not yet found. The general appearance, and the prospects obtained, bear out the opinion that there are richer deposits of gold in the district than any yet discovered.

Owharoa District.—This district is situated near the gorge of the Ohinemuri River, leading from the Waihi Plains. The only mines working are the Smile of Fortune and the Radical, both under tribute. They have paid during the year, but especially during the latter part, discoveries having been made which give a more permanent character to this part of the field.

The road leading to Katikati and Tauranga, made by the Thames County Council, passes through this district, and will enable provisions and mining requisites to be carried out at a much less cost.

The following returns show the quantity of quartz crushed and tailings treated during the year, and the amount of gold obtained therefrom; and the number of batteries on the field on the 31st March last:—

RETURN of Quartz, &c., crushed, and Gold obtained therefrom, for Year ending 31st March, 1879.

MONTH.				Quartz Crushed.			Tailings Treated.			Yield of Gold.		
				Tons	cwt.	lb.	Tons	cwt.	lb.	Oz.	dwt.	gr.
April, 1878	...	...	...	3,903	7	80	724	2	56	5,381	15	20
May, 1878	...	...	...	4,158	10	84	1,294	4	48	4,687	16	1
June, 1878	...	...	...	3,815	2	15	2,110	5	0	5,515	5	8
July, 1878	...	...	...	3,193	5	17	1,573	6	104	4,437	19	16
August, 1878	...	...	...	4,210	10	0	1,736	12	51	4,765	1	20
September, 1878	...	...	...	3,038	17	18	1,599	6	50	5,825	10	20
October, 1878	...	...	...	4,271	3	6	1,690	16	59	4,769	15	3
November, 1878	...	...	...	3,884	11	60	1,431	11	18	5,254	4	0
December, 1878	...	...	...	3,671	13	107	1,389	3	106	6,062	19	2
January, 1879	...	...	...	2,473	5	55	523	0	51	2,179	2	18
February, 1879	...	...	...	2,481	10	91	924	12	51	3,541	14	14
March, 1879	...	...	...	2,815	8	98	1,221	6	52	4,785	11	1
Total	...	...	...	41,917	6	71	16,278	8	86	57,206	17	3