

HAURAKI NORTH OR COROMANDEL.

Mining matters were very dull for the first half of the year; this may be accounted for that prospecting in most of the claims had been confined to the surface portions of their ground which is nearly exhausted. On the other hand, the works for opening up the reefs in the Kapanga Mine and on the Tokatea Range, at deep levels, are of an expensive character, and can only be advanced slowly on account of the difficulties to be contended with.

Tiki District.—About the month of September attention was directed here by gold found on a block of land within the proclaimed gold field boundaries, but being private property does not come under the Gold Mining Districts Act. Good prospects and parcels of rich specimens were obtained in several claims which have been thrown open for gold-mining purposes. This was the cause of claims being taken up in the vicinity on the gold field, and prospecting in that locality is now extensively carried on. The terms under which the owners of the land have leased it to the miners are not so satisfactory as those under the Gold Fields Regulations, and a considerable amount of time has been wasted, as men were unwilling to disclose particulars regarding finds of gold until satisfactory arrangements could be concluded with the owners of the land. Crashings from several of the claims on the private property have been from five to nine ounces to the ton. A claim called the Success, also on private property, is being worked, and some very rich quartz has been found. This is situated on the range about mid-way between Tiki and Tokatea, near the Whangapoua track.

Tokatea Range.—Several claims held by miners are worked with moderate success, and three parties of tributers in the Pride of Tokatea Mine are making fair wages.

Tokatea and Bismarck Mines.—Very little work has been done at the surface and upper levels of these mines, a few tributers only were employed. The principal work, which is carried on by both companies equally, is driving the low level tunnel from the Kennedy Bay side of the range; this has reached a distance of 1,050 feet from the entrance. The reef has been tapped in the Bismarck ground, and water in great quantities is flowing through the tunnel; this will have the effect of draining the reef, enabling the manager to rise and sink to make connection with the upper level, when good returns may be expected. The tunnel has still to be driven about 450 feet before the boundary of the Tokatea Mine is reached, but as the ground is now softer since the reef was cut it can be finished more speedily and for less money per foot than what it has already cost, and as it will be continued on the lode the quartz can be tested as it is broken out. The amount already expended on this tunnel is nearly £6,000, and it has taken two years' work, as the rock has been very hard. One of the National rock-drills has been used. The ground is now so much softer that the use of the drill has been discontinued, and driving is done by hand labour at a cost of 30s. per foot, three shifts of men being continually employed. The patience and energy displayed by these two companies is well deserving of success.

Kapanga District.—Kapanga Mine: Sinking the shaft has been continued, and it has now reached a depth of 370 feet; the reef at this point is calculated to be about 460 feet from the surface, so that a considerable time will yet elapse before the shaft can be sunk deep enough to cut it. The reef has only been worked down to the 300-foot level, therefore a large block of it will be open as soon as the shaft is down to the desired depth. The mine is drained by a pump, which is worked by a beam-engine; the pump pipes are 15 inches in diameter, but, as the water is not yet very heavy in the shaft, only 10-inch plungers are used.

Beach District.—A very limited amount of work has been done in the mines in this locality. The Union Beach, which yielded large returns of gold in the past, have ceased working at deep levels; the present workings are in the hill above sea level, where a few men are employed by the company prospecting, and two small parties of tributers are making fair wages working on small veins near the surface. The Golden Pah Mine are confining their operations to prospecting at the 80-foot level in the shaft, and the water has been allowed to rise since the Union Beach Mine ceased pumping from their low level. The United Mine, next the Union Beach, are employing a few men working on surface leaders.

The quantity of quartz crushed and gold obtained during the year was as follows: Tons crushed, 720; gold obtained, 4,960 ozs.

The future prospects of Coromandel are more hopeful than they have been for some time past. The advancement of the Tokatea Tunnel to the vicinity of the rich reefs worked in the upper parts of the Tokatea and Bismarck Mines will soon determine their value, at a depth of over 200 feet from previous workings where gold was left in the floors of the drives, and successful returns from these mines will no doubt cause other companies holding ground on the Tokatea Range to prospect at deeper levels. The rich patches of specimens found at the Tiki has caused numerous parties to prospect in that district, and when batteries are erected and the miners settle down to regular work some good returns may be expected. The very rich stone from the Success Mine has given encouragement to other holders of ground in that neighbourhood, and prospecting is carried on with energy. Although in the Beach District mining has been very dull for a time, there is no doubt but that a reaction will soon take place, and a scheme be adopted for the further development of the mines. The surface portions which are over sea level have not been so rich as where the reefs were worked underneath; and as lower levels can only be reached by the expenditure of capital, the claims would be more valuable properties if amalgamation of interests was effected, and the cost of sinking shafts, pumping water, and driving levels, was borne by combining the resources of the various companies who hold ground here.

TE AROHA GOLD-MINING DISTRICT.

This field was opened on the 25th November, 1880, with a grand flourish of trumpets, and as much noise made about it as if it was beyond doubt a rich gold field, which opinion was kept up by interested individuals and by others who were ignorant of quartz gold-mining; but the general opinion of the Thames gold-miners who had experience soon came to be that there was nothing to warrant an extensive rush. The gold obtained by the prospectors on the surface and in the leader which they afterwards found did not continue down to any great depth, as the rock became very hard and pinched out