

of stone crushed was 27,198 tons, which yielded 14,591oz. of gold, valued at £56,622 9s. The yield of alluvial gold is much the same as the previous year—viz., 4,650oz., valued at £17,650. Thus the value of the output of gold of this district for the year amounts to £74,272 9s. Although these figures are not altogether satisfactory, yet it must be borne in mind that a great amount of dead work has been done in many mines; and, as this is now drawing to completion, the field will soon be reaping the benefit. The mines, generally at the present time are showing a marked improvement, particularly in the Boatman's district; and, in order to give you an idea of this, I will now furnish you with a short account of the operations of some of the principal mines.

*Welcome.*—On the completion of the sinking of the main shaft, steps were taken to open up No. 8 level, which, owing to an accident to the machinery and the delay in effecting repairs, occupied until the end of last year, since which time they have been stoping stone and connecting with the winzes for air. It is thought that sufficient ground is now opened up to keep the battery employed from eighteen months to two years. It is proposed to sink the main shaft about 150ft. further, so that the next level will be ready by the time the present level is exhausted, which is certainly a step in the right direction. From a recent crushing it is proved that the stone on this level will be highly remunerative, and regular dividends may be expected when once the mine is placed in proper working order.

*Fiery Cross.*—Very extensive operations have been carried on in this company's mine during the year with the view of opening up a new level, and these may now be said to be completed, and certainly with very satisfactory results. Two winzes have been sunk from the 450-foot level to a depth of 135ft. These winzes are 200ft. apart, and are now connected at the bottom by a main level; so that an extensive block of stone is now opened up and ready for stoping out. It is a matter for general congratulation that the reef at this level—which is one of the deepest workings in the field, being 585ft. from the surface—is of very superior quality, and shows marked improvement, both in this respect and in permanence, on anything discovered at shallower levels. The reef averages 3ft. in width, and is in many parts 4ft. wide and over. The stone is of good quality, a recent crushing yielding at the rate of 36dwt. per ton; as the mine is well opened, the current year is expected to be a prosperous one for this company.

*Just in Time.*—During the year 250ft. of main level has been driven, and 110ft. of up-rise constructed. The connection between the upper and lower workings is now complete, and quartz is being taken out for crushing. The reef when struck was about 6ft. wide, with a fair show of gold. A portion of the upper workings have been let on tribute, and some exceptionally rich quartz obtained therefrom, 47 tons yielding 163oz. of gold. There are five tributers at work, and they have averaged over £4 per week, inclusive of a shoot and other connections which they had to make.

*Reform.*—This company has driven from the level of the bottom of the Just in Time shaft, a distance of about 500ft. in a southerly direction, and to the previously-unexplored portion of the mine. The company has been successful in striking a reef averaging about 3ft. thick. The reef has been driven on a distance of over 100ft., and the stone is reported to be of good quality. The drive is still being carried south on the reef, and its further extension will be of service, not only to this company, but to other companies in defining the line of reef south of Boatman's Creek, where no permanent reef has hitherto been traced to any depth, although surface-indications on the line are good. The company will start to stope on the reef shortly, and, as they have 200ft. overhead to the surface, a large quantity of quartz may be expected to be broken out and crushed during the year. As the company is out of debt, and should the stone yield anything like what is expected of it, there should soon be returns from this mine.

*Eureka.*—This company, not being successful in striking the Welcome reef, has applied for and obtained twelve months' protection.

*Lone Star.*—This lease is situated on the watershed between Boatman's and the left-hand branch of the Inangahua River. A reef was discovered in this ground. The reef, which has been driven on about 20ft., is about 2ft. thick, showing gold freely. Indeed, it is reported that it would yield at least 3oz. per ton. This lease is being watched with a considerable amount of interest, as it is considerably to the south of any other workings in Boatman's, and the proving of a good lode in this locality would tend to open up a good extent of country.

In the Murray Creek portion of the district the centre of attraction has been the Venus Company. This is one of the old companies. The first level yielded 2s. in dividends, and the company crushed their stone at the Golden Fleece battery. A winze was sunk 48ft. from No. 1 level, when that work had to be stopped owing to a large body of water being met with. Another level was then started 168ft. below No. 1, and this was driven a distance of 775ft., which, from the underlie of the reef in the winze, was considered far enough to strike the reef if it "lived down." The reef not being found, operations were suspended. In July last another winze 48ft. north of the first was sunk from No. 1 level to a depth of 74ft. A fresh survey of the mine was then made, and it was found that, from the underlie of the reef in the second winze, No. 2 level was not far enough in by 25ft. Work was resumed in No. 2 level, and the reef was struck in 23ft. The reef was driven on a distance of 150ft., and the winze connected with the level by an uprise of 119ft., thus giving 193ft. of backs. Having thus proved the mine, the company purchased the crushing-plant of the Energetic Company,