

in this district. The gold, silver, and other metals contained in them require each its own special treatment, and suitable machinery must be erected, involving the expenditure of a large amount of capital. A greater extent of land may possibly be required to justify the expenditure by any single company.

Special claims will probably be required at Waiorongomai, as individual miners or companies cannot hope to hold and work small claims to advantage. The extension of the tracks from Waiorongomai towards Tui Creek, and from Karangahake towards Te Aroha, for which a grant has been made by the Mines Department to the Ohinemuri County Council, will open up a large extent of country for the miners, and enable prospectors to test the main Waiorongomai reef, and also those reefs extending from the Champion Lode Mine at Tui Creek, in places which are at present inaccessible.

A deposit of gold-bearing rock has been found on the farm of Mr. J. B. Smith, at Waihou, in the Thames Valley, about six miles from Te Aroha Township. Several samples tested by Mr. J. A. Pond, of Auckland, Mr. H. H. Adams, of Waiorongomai, and Mr. Montgomery, of the Thames School of Mines, have given various results, and a parcel of 3cwt., treated at Mr. G. Fraser's works in Auckland, yielded at the rate of £1 13s. per ton. This deposit is a most unusual one for gold to be found in, as it is in large boulders of a kind of cement named by Mr. Montgomery a "rhyolitic breccia," and has the appearance of pumiceous drift cemented, and containing small crystals of quartz. Mr. Smith's land is outside the mining district; but he is at present engaged in prospecting the ground where the boulders have been found.

The population of the Te Aroha District is about the same as last year—viz., 1,150. The Township of Te Aroha still continues to increase, the hot springs and baths maintaining their popularity; and many people visit Te Aroha for the purpose of obtaining rest and health.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Mining on the whole Coromandel Peninsula is at present depressed, and as a consequence trade is dull, and on all sides are heard complaints of hard times. The introduction of the La Monte furnace raised hopes of a more prosperous future, but its failure to deal remuneratively with the refractory ores of the district caused great disappointment and intensified the feeling of depression. There can be no doubt, from many experiments made with ores from different parts of the peninsula, that the discovery or adaptation of some process by which the great waste of gold and silver could be obviated would be of immense benefit to the whole district, and large blocks of land in various parts of the goldfield now idle, because they will not pay to work under the existing conditions, would be taken up and afford employment to hundreds of men. Private enterprise, induced by the prospects of remunerative investments, will, no doubt, in time succeed in obtaining some satisfactory solution of the difficulty; but in the meantime the whole district suffers serious loss and injury. The project mooted by the committee of the Thames School of Mines, of erecting at the Thames—as the most suitable and central position—an experimental plant, where tests could be conducted and the various methods at work in other places tried on the ores from different portions of the district, is one that commends itself to practical miners. The benefit that would accrue, not only to this mining district, but to the goldfields of the whole colony, will, in my opinion, justify the expenditure of public money in assisting the undertaking. Though temporarily depressed, I see no reason to despair of the future of this district. Eighteen years' incessant work has necessarily exhausted much of the wealth of the Thames mines, but there are in many of them large blocks of land that have not been yet thoroughly worked, while the deeper levels are still unprospected. In the newer districts, such as Karangahake, Waihi, and Waiomo, the prospects are decidedly encouraging, while at Coromandel there are evident signs of improvement, and the introduction of English capital encourages the hope that more systematic and vigorous operations will obtain results calculated to incite others to renewed efforts in other parts of the district. It must be remembered, too, when speaking of the Thames mines, that they cover, after all, a very limited area. Most of the mines which have produced great quantities of gold in the past are within a radius of half a mile from the town. There are many miles of the peninsula unprospected to this day, and even at a distance of two miles inland from Grahamstown scarcely a miner is to be seen at work, although gold has been found in the ranges from almost the opening of the goldfield. That this part of the field is worth more attention than it receives is proved by the success that has attended the operations of the Auckland Company; and, with better roads, increased facility, cheapness of transit, and a more perfect method of treating the quartz, there can be no doubt much of this land now for many years unoccupied could be profitably worked.

At Karangahake, Railey's battery and plant, elsewhere referred to, seems in a great measure to have met the want hitherto experienced of a process applicable to the mixed ores of that district, containing as they do gold and silver both in the metallic form and in chemical combinations, such as sulphides, &c., and has led to the adoption of the details in other batteries in the locality. From the satisfactory trials already made of quartz from several mines, it may be confidently expected that during the next twelve months Karangahake will rank among the most regular gold-producing portions of the Hauraki District.

It is to be hoped that the endeavour now being made to obtain the assistance of English capitalists in developing the Waihi mines will be successful, as they undoubtedly contain ores of great richness, but which are, with the appliances of treating them at present in use, practically of little value. News has just been received from England that 16 tons of quartz from the Union Mine has been sold there to a German firm, and has realized £43 per ton, the assay being £50 per ton—namely, 9½oz. of gold and 55oz. silver. Quartz of the same quality by the ordinary battery-treatment is said to have yielded only 1½oz. of gold to the ton.

At Waiorongomai a more hopeful feeling prevails than has done for some time past. Two influential companies have been organized for the purpose of working large areas of land and