

## TAPU AND WAIOMO.

A few mines are still being worked at Tapu. Sheridan's is the principal. He has worked his claim continuously for many years with varying success, but just at present appears to have got on a good run of gold. As he has not yet crushed his stone, which is mostly picked from the new run, it will not appear in this year's return.

As I stated in my last report, seven licensed holdings had again been taken up at Waiomo, and Mr. Peter Hansen, with several other gentlemen, have erected a small experimental plant, consisting of a stone-breaker, four McKay grinding-pans, and two settlers worked by water-power; but so far the shareholders are not altogether satisfied with their experiments, for, though the ore is rich, it is of a very complex nature, and they now think that by forcing steam through their pulp they will obtain much better results. The two holdings they own are the Gem and the Monowai. At the former they have 300 tons of quartz to grass, and 200 at their plant awaiting treatment. At the latter mine they have 70 tons to grass, and 80 at the plant. They are only attempting at present to treat the surface portions of the reefs where the ore is oxidized, these reefs as they go down being known to be mineral lodes. The large lode has been cross-cut to 40ft. without meeting with the wall. This reef, as far as it has been ascertained by assay, goes from £1 to £10 per ton; the other reef is 18ft. wide, and averages from £4 10s. to £29. These gentlemen deserve to succeed, for they, unlike the Paroquet Company, have well opened up their mine, and now know what their mines can produce as soon as they have a payable process to treat it. It is thought the mineral portions of the reefs will have to be concentrated. On the Mount Zeehan licensed holding, which chiefly belongs to some Napier gentleman, very little has been done. It has been slightly opened up in three places. There are two reefs, one about 6ft. and another from 1ft. to 3ft. wide of complex ore—copper, lead, and zinc forming a large percentage. The shareholders have been very unfortunate, having exercised too little supervision; in consequence a very large sum of money has been spent with nothing to show for it. A small plant was erected where the water-power was very inefficient, whereas a good water-power could have been obtained within a reasonable distance of the mine, and thus saved the heavy expense now paid for cartage (£2 5s). The company now, however, intend to proceed on more business-like principles by placing a reliable man in charge of the mine, and have appointed Mr. James Napier to superintend the operations to be carried on in connection with the treatment of the ore at the plant, which I understand will be the Cassell process. If successful they will then erect a plant nearer to the mine.

## THAMES.

The prospects of this portion of the district looked somewhat encouraging in the early part of the year, as a large amount of work was in progress in several of the mines, and it was anticipated that, at any rate, some discoveries would have resulted; I regret to say, however, that these expectations have not been realised, and the year has been one of exceptional dullness. In the Moanataiari Company's mine a large staff of men has been employed in various works, the principal being the prospecting of the Golden Age and other reefs. The reef mentioned is of large size, being in places about 20ft. in width, and throughout averages some 5dwt. to the load, with occasional richer patches. The returns on the whole have been encouraging, as the company has been enabled to liquidate an overdraft of several thousand pounds, and at the same time materially improve their crushing-plant.

The result of operations in the Saxon Mine has been disappointing in the extreme, the returns towards the end of December having become so small as to necessitate soon afterwards the suspension of work at Nos. 5 and 6 levels. This was the only mine working at a depth requiring pumping operations to be carried on by the Big Pump below the 400ft. level, and upon their ceasing work at the levels mentioned it was decided by the Drainage Board to in future only fork out the water from the 400ft. level. The number of men employed on the mine has been reduced from about one hundred to twenty, and it is feared that a further reduction will shortly take place.

The Waiotahi still continues to maintain its reputation as one of our most regular gold-producers, and occasionally the shareholders are rewarded with a dividend. About forty men are continuously employed in this mine. The operations in the Cambria Mine have been carried on to a certain extent successfully, although the balance to credit has not been sufficient to pay a dividend. The quartz crushed during the year has averaged about 1½oz. to the load. Early in the year great expectations were formed regarding the May Queen Mine, particularly with reference to the new No. 2 level. Some good returns were obtained, and the prospects in the drive east looked well until a change of country took place, since which returns have been very moderate. The operations for the year have, however, been remunerative. Of the mines on the Una Hill, the Pride of Karaka was for a short time very promising, but for the last month or two the yield has shown a falling-off. The Occidental is now being worked mainly on tribute. In the Magnolia a large amount of valuable prospecting work has been carried on, and a low-level tunnel put in several hundred feet, but the returns so far have not justified anticipations. A winding- and pumping-plant has been erected over the Consol Gold-mining Company's shaft at the Hape Creek, and the mine thoroughly opened up, but up to the present the company has been unsuccessful in obtaining satisfactory returns. In the Karaka Creek work has been carried on in the Lone Hand and Adelaide licensed holdings, but with indifferent results. Further up the creek several small parties of miners are working claims under miners' rights, and are doing fairly well. In the direction of the Kuranui Hill, the outlook for the Hazelbank, which has lately absorbed the once-famous Caldonian, is very encouraging. Comer's and Hansen's licensed holdings are still working away on low-grade dirt, and as a yield of 1dwt. or 2dwt. per ton is remunerative, ore of even the poorest quality is made to pay. In the Moanataiari Creek and Punga Flat the Fame and Fortune Mine is now being solely worked by tributers with varying success. The Calliope, Alburnia, Flying Cloud, Freedom, Junction, and Orlando have done a good deal of work, but have not added