

GOLD- AND SILVER-MINING.

The result of gold-mining operations last year has, on the whole, been satisfactory, notwithstanding the fact that the days have gone past for rich patches of auriferous gravels and quartz being easily got. The quantity of gold produced last year was 12,043oz. more than for the previous year, and there has been a decrease in the actual number of miners employed to the extent of 644. This shows that by improved methods of working the ground, and better appliances and mode of recovering and saving the precious metal from ores and alluvial drifts, more gold can be obtained with less labour than in former years. The following statement will show a comparison with the yield of the previous year :—

Name of District.	Year ended 31st March, 1894.		Year ended 31st March, 1893.		Increase for 1894.	Decrease for 1894.
	Oz.	£	Oz.	£	Oz.	Oz.
Auckland	52,426	215,012	41,052	165,849	11,374	..
Marlborough	2,262	9,037	3,055	12,083	..	793
Nelson	2,179	8,141	2,792	10,609	..	613
West Coast	98,990	395,733	101,636	406,523	..	2,706
Otago	84,905	342,302	80,124	322,403	4,781	..
Totals	240,702	970,220	228,659	917,467	12,043	..

The above statement shows an increase in the Auckland District of 11,374oz. Of this amount there has been an increase in the Ohinemuri County of 10,933oz.; Thames Borough, 960oz.; and Thames, 108oz.: a decrease of 598oz. in Coromandel County, and 29oz. in Piako County and Whangarei. In Marlborough there was a decrease in the yield of gold last year to the extent of 793oz.; in Nelson, 613oz.; and in the West Coast districts to the extent of 2,706oz. In some portions of the district—namely, in Inangahua County—there has been an increased yield to the extent of 3,353oz., and in the Ross Borough 127oz.; but there has been a decrease in the yield in the Buller County to the extent of 190oz., Grey County 2,882oz., Westland County 2,253oz., Borough of Kumara 363oz., and in the Borough of Hokitika 498oz. In Otago the increased yield of gold last year was 4,781oz. This increase was, in Tuapeka County, 4,389oz.; Vincent County, 2,173oz.; Waitaki County, 601oz.; Bruce County, 131oz.; Lake County, 198oz.; Stewart Island, 70oz.; and Bruce County, 8oz.: while there has been a decrease in the yield—in the Taieri County of 265oz., in Maniototo County 123oz., in Waihemo County 829oz., in Waikouaiti County 169oz., in Wallace County 756oz., in Fiord County 292oz., and in Southland County, &c., 355oz.

The large increase in the yield of gold last year in the Ohinemuri County is due to the more extensive workings of the Waihi Gold- and Silver-mining Company, also the produce from the Crown Company's mine at Karangahake, and Mr. Russell's mine at Waitekauri.

Although there is a considerable percentage of silver in the bullion from the mines in the North Island goldfields, there is no one working silver-ore by itself. The silver is extracted from the bullion by the banks, and it is only from this source that silver has been obtained. At Karangahake, Waihi, Waitekauri, and Waiorongomai there is a larger percentage of silver in the ore than that found at the Thames and Coromandel; but even at the last-mentioned places the gold obtained is alloyed with silver, which reduces the price of the gold considerably below what is obtained in the Middle Island. Some of the gold obtained at Coromandel is worth about £3 per ounce, and this is considered a high price, whereas at the Thames the average value of the gold does not exceed £2 14s. per ounce. During last year 63,076oz. of silver was extracted, representing a value of £9,743, as against 22,053oz., valued at £3,996, for the previous year, which shows an increase in the quantity exported last year of 41,023oz., representing £5,747.

QUARTZ WORKINGS.

NORTH ISLAND.

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

Puhipuhi.

So far, the gold- and silver-lodes in the Puhipuhi district have not proved remunerative for working, but, with the exception of the Prospectors' Claim, there has been very little work done to prove whether the lodes contain sufficient gold and silver for working. In regard to the Prospectors' Claim, the richest ore was found near the surface; yet none of this could be worked at a profit. This, however, is due to a great extent to the crude machinery and appliances used by the Prospectors' Company. Very few of the shareholders, if any, know anything about mining, and more especially in regard to the extraction of silver from its ores. Some of them, it is said, knew a little about assaying, and this little knowledge, no doubt, led them to suppose that they knew more about the metallurgy of silver than they did; but the mere knowledge acquired from reading books on the subject, without having a practical experience, contributed to a great extent to the various failures made in dealing with the ore. The field is one which is well worthy of prospecting, as silver is known to exist in the lodes. At the same time, there is nothing to warrant the formation of any large company at the present time to erect expensive machinery and appliances to work any of the lodes, as far as they have been prospected. Before erection of machinery, any company or private party would probably require to spend several thousand pounds to prospect the different lodes to see whether there is sufficient ore of a payable character for working to justify further expense.

The Puhipuhi field is not a place for poor men to come to with the object of taking up ground to earn a livelihood. It will require a considerable amount of capital to prospect and develop it, and, even if a large body of payable ore were found, capital would be required to erect a plant to