

The attention directed to taking up land for mining throughout the Hauraki Mining District led to a considerable area being again occupied in this district.

*British Gold- and Silver-mining Company's Mine* (Area, 600 acres).—Very little mining work was carried on during the year, the whole of the company's attention having been devoted to the erection of the chloridizing roasting-kiln, and transforming the battery for Mr. French's new process. After the battery and kiln were used for a short time operations ceased, and the mine was closed down. The proceeds of Mr. French's treatment cannot be obtained, as he, shortly after making a trial of the plant, left the district. It appears that all the capital of the company was exhausted in prosecuting Mr. French's experiments, and the directors are endeavouring to induce the representatives of capital to find sufficient funds to work the mine.

*Dr. Jim Mine* (Area, 200 acres).—This mine comprises the Dr. Jim and Cecil Rhodes Claims, and is situated next the British Company's Mine, in the north part of Puhipuhi Forest. About 200 ft. of driving has been done in the mine, as well as surface prospecting. Four men were employed up till the time the claims were protected. As this company has no machinery it is intended to try some of the ore in the British Company's battery before erecting a plant. There are four reefs, from 3 ft. to 8 ft. in width, in the ground carrying sulphide of silver.

Work has also been carried on in the New Puhipuhi, Waimarie, and other claims; sulphide of silver is found in the quartz, but so far it has not been demonstrated to be present in payable quantity.

A considerable amount of attention was directed to the Kauri Mountain, near Whangarei Heads, where gold has been obtained in small quantities in veins and leaders. Another discovery has been made of a large so-called auriferous dyke, said to be from 100 ft. to 150 ft. in height, and from 300 ft. to 400 ft. wide, where it projects into the sea. If gold exists throughout such a large mass of material a very small yield per ton would be payable, as the stuff could be cheaply mined.

#### *Ohaeawai.*

A certain amount of machinery was erected for the treatment of the mercury deposits at this place, but no results have been obtained. Prospecting was occasionally carried on, and a gold-bearing leader discovered at Pukepokako, on the road to Kirikiri, but so far there has been no valuable result.

Throughout the Bay of Islands County occasional discoveries of quartz have been made, and on several occasions I have received samples collected by Captain Stephenson, but there appears to be a decided absence or only slight traces of the precious metals in the tests made.

#### GREAT BARRIER ISLAND.

Great Barrier Island lies about fifty-seven miles north-east of Auckland, being the largest of the belt of islands in and north of the Hauraki Gulf. It is about twenty miles long, is ten miles across at the widest (from Owena to the mainland near Rangianua) and three miles at the nearest part (from Oruawharo to Blind Bay). The country is very rough, from Kaitoke Valley to Hara-taonga particularly, the Hira-kimata (Mount Hobson) Ranges intervening before the Awana Block, known also as the antimony property, is reached. There is plenty of kauri on the island, a large portion of which is the property of the Kauri Timber Company, while manuka and fern render travelling to any point past Kaitoke Creek somewhat difficult. The scenery is splendid, there being a wild grandeur which cannot fail to please. A bullock-track runs as far as the Iona Mine, and a horse-track leads from Blind Bay through nearly all the mining properties, and these will shortly be followed by a road from Blind Bay to Whangaparapara Bay which can be negotiated by vehicles—a thing impossible at present.

#### *The First Discoveries of Gold and Silver.*

As may be expected, a good deal of controversy has taken place regarding the question as to who first discovered valuable minerals on the island. It is alleged that as far back as 1857 a miner named James Perry prospected the northern end and discovered antimony and copper and slight traces of silver, but very little attention was paid to the matter at that time. This statement is doubted by many old residents of the island, who state that it is only a few years back since prospecting was properly carried on. Twelve years ago, however, the property now known as the Awana Antimony-mines was prospected by Arthur T. Lee and A. Prescott. Two years later Lee accidentally found stone showing antimony at the head of the Awana Creek, below Hira-kimata, on the eastern side. He was subsequently despatched by an Auckland syndicate, of which Messrs. W. F. Buckland and Charles Clayforth were the head, to cut the antimony lode which was supposed to exist on the property. This was done, and some good specimens taken out and forwarded to Auckland. For several years members of the Sanderson family, who have resided on the island, at Tryphena and Blind Bay, for thirty-two years, have prospected various portions, particularly that in which the mines at present being worked are situated. Six years ago Ben and William Sanderson prospected White Cliffs, but it was twelve months before they struck what was considered payable ore. On the property now known as the Original (previously called the Prospectors' Union Jack), on the Great Barrier, Kauri Timber Company's property near Whangaparapara, and on Ryan's freehold good prospects were obtained. The party pegged out the Original, and worked it for two years, putting in two drives and cross-cutting. Some 14 tons of stone were taken out and treated, the return of bullion being considered very satisfactory. Work was continued for a short time, and abandoned on account of the patchy nature of the ground. When the mining boom was at its height attention was again directed to the Great Barrier, and there has been a marked revival in mining during the year. Work was carried on in the original Great Barrier Claim, which was exploited by the Anglo-Continental Syndicate, who held an option over the mine. After several months had been spent in prospecting