

open up the main reef, but will intersect numerous cross-reefs where they junction, and will be of great service to the adjoining properties, by enabling them to work at a great depth without being troubled with water. This will no doubt become the main outlet for the ore for the whole district. The intention is to erect a large plant to treat the ore, and have a locomotive to convey it from all parts to the mill. The company have already spent about £10,000 in prospecting, development, ore-testing, and machinery, and are doing everything possible to hasten the completion of the main low tunnel, which is estimated to cost over £30,000.

Seddon and Cadman.—A considerable amount of work has been done in prospecting the various reefs formerly opened in this mine. It is understood that an option has been obtained over this property, and sufficient capital will be forthcoming to still further continue development works, and then, if satisfactory, the purchase will be arranged.

Prospecting work has been carried on in the Welcome, Loyalty Palace, New Munster, Great Western, and other mines.

Montezuma Mine (Area, 70 acres).—This mine is situated on the western slope of the main range, and extends from the boundary of the hot-springs reserve to within 8 chains of the Champion Mine. A large number of reefs traverse the ground, varying in thickness from 3 ft. to 6 ft., and generally of a highly-mineralised character. The situation is such that 900 ft. of backs on the reef can be had with a moderate length of cross-cut. Three men were employed. Mr. John Williams, one of the owners, supplied the following particulars:—

“Machinery is about to be erected in the near future, under the supervision of the Rev. Joseph Campbell, who is at present in England procuring a complete plant for treating the quartz by what is known as the “thermo-hyperphoric process” (Messrs. Lockwood and Campbell’s patent). A company has been formed and registered in London to work the properties. A second company is being formed for the treatment of ores (refractory and otherwise) on an extensive scale. This process is guaranteed to give a return of from 90 to 95 per cent. of the assay-value of stone treated, at a cost of from 5s. to 7s. 6d per ton.”

Prospecting operations have also been carried on in the Taranaki, Hot Springs, Golden Crown, Ethel Reef, Gipsy King, Mount Morgan, and other claims, from which no returns have been received.

Tui District.

Champion Mine (Area, 98 acres).—This mine is now owned by the Tui Gold-mines (Limited), an English company. During the greater portion of the year there was very little work carried on, but on the new owners taking possession a staff of twenty men were employed, and the old levels and workings put in order, and a parcel of 25 tons of stone taken out and sent to London for experimental purposes. It is intended to ascertain the most improved method of dealing with the complex ores found in the mine, after which suitable machinery is to be erected.

Prospecting works have been carried on in the Silver Star, Grand Junction, Day Dawn, Silver King, Golden Band, Waitara, and other claims, but no report of any valuable discoveries has been received.

General Remarks.

Several claims are worked by English owners, and extensive works are carried on, notably by the Aroha Mines Company, at Waiorongomai, which is engaged in driving an adit tunnel from the outcrop near the township. This tunnel is designed to be extended two miles and a quarter, and will have a depth from the surface at the northern end of some 1,800 ft. The yield of gold in this district was from 934 tons of quartz, and amounted to 376 oz., of a value of £986 10s. During the year sixty men were employed.

TAURANGA COUNTY.

Te Puke District.

Clarke’s Freehold (Area, 300 acres).—Three drives have been put in: No. 1, near surface, 40 ft., in which a reef about 9 ft. in width has been cut; No. 2 drive, 40 ft., of which 25 ft. appears to be quartz and reef formation; in No. 3 drive 90 ft. has been put in, and the reef is expected to be to hand when 100 ft. has been completed. Two men were employed.

Te Puke Gold Reefs, formerly Fleming’s Freehold (Area, 1,087 acres).—A large reef was cut in the north cross-cut, and although 40 ft. was driven through it the wall was not reached. In the south cross-cut the reef was 20 ft. in width, and in the low level, 57 ft. deep, the reef was 24 ft. The quartz is generally of low grade; samples assayed varied from 6s. 8d. to £6 3s. per ton. The mine is well situated for being worked, as the outcrop is 480 ft. above the creek-level, and there is sufficient power obtainable from the creek to work machinery. Six men were employed.

Kaimai Valley and Katikati Districts.

A number of claims have been taken up in the locality and prospecting carried out, but so far no important discoveries have been recorded.

ACCIDENTS IN GOLD-MINES.

There was one fatal accident caused by an explosion, and two accidents of a serious nature from other causes, whilst four slight accidents were also reported as being due to explosives.

James May was injured by falling down a pass in the Waihi Mine on the 1st April, 1896.

A miner named Myers was in the act of pressing half a plug of gelignite into a previously-exploded hole when an explosion took place. This occurred in the Sheridan Mine on the 16th May, 1896. The manager of the mine reports that Myers will lose one of his eyes.

Samuel Baker was injured by an explosion of gelignite in the Waihi Mine. It appears two charges were fired and only one report was heard. Baker went back at once, when the second charge exploded, causing him to be injured.