

A little prospecting has also been done in this locality on the Stanley and Peveril Claims, but nothing of importance has been discovered, and no returns of gold made.

*West Tokatea Mine.*—Very little work has been done on this property, which has been under protection for most of the year pending a reconstruction of the company. This, I am informed, has been successfully arranged. Preliminary operations are proceeding with a view to further developing the mine.

*Queen of the North Claim.*—In the early part of the year this ground was for some time unoccupied, but was subsequently taken up by M. Kemner, and is at present worked by two wages-men and two tributers, the work being confined to driving and rising on small leaders from which rich stone has been obtained. So far, no stone has been crushed on behalf of the present owners.

*Forest Queen Mine.*—Prospecting work has been steadily carried on in this mine with two men in expectation of discovering a payable run of stone. Although a little gold is occasionally seen, yet up to the present, the general ore has not been considered worth crushing, or of sufficient value to warrant the expense of taking it to a battery for treatment. This latter is a heavy item on account of the position of the mine. No crushings have taken place on behalf of the present holders during the year.

*Royal Oak Mine.*—Development-work has chiefly been confined to further testing the Tribute reef between Nos. 3 and 7 levels, but without much success, only one small block proving payable between Nos. 5 and 6 levels. 1,766 ft. have been driven and stoped altogether on this leader, but nothing of importance has been opened up. During the winter months the battery was kept fully employed on ore from the old stopes between Nos. 3 and 6 levels, the bulk coming from where the rich quartz was won in 1898 on the Tribute leader. The ore, though of low grade averaged between 10s. and £1 per ton, and paid a few shillings over working-expenses, the cost of mining, tramping, and crushing not exceeding 8s. 6d. per ton. The general quartz, after all the stone showing gold had been picked out for separate treatment, was worth very little, averaging only about £1 10s. per ton. Tokatea reef: 562 ft. of driving and stoping has been carried out here as well as several hundreds of feet of old workings re-opened, but nothing payable was discovered. The old stopes in the lower levels were also tested, but with unpayable results. At No. 7 (lowest) level the shaft which is down 180 ft. was kept free of water until March, when the water became troublesome. Operations had to be suspended and the pump withdrawn. The 180 ft. level below No. 7 was extended east a total distance of 405 ft. from the shaft; the reef was poor and unpayable for the 110 ft. of driving done during that period. A little gold was obtained west of the shaft 50 ft. below the floor of No. 7, but not payable. Turnbull's leader: This is a small branch vein running off from the Tribute reef at No. 5 level, on which 123 ft. of driving and stoping has been done, but it gave a small return and poor value. No. 3 reef: This reef has been driven on for 128 ft. south from "A" level; some rich gold was obtained from it on the upper levels, but no gold was seen here. The new ore-body exposed at No. 6 level in the crosscut driven from the drive on the Tokatea reef to intersect the tribute reef has also been further tested with more success. It has been driven on at No. 6 level for a length of 76 ft., and stoped 274 ft., with what may be termed payable results; this vein seems to be a dropper from the Main Tribute leader, starting just below No. 5 level, dipping away northwards on its footwall side; at the No. 6 level it is a good strong lead, and the country encasing it is excellent. Being within the parallel zone of where the rich patch was won in the Tribute reef, there is a chance that some good stone may be secured here. Several other likely looking ore-bodies have also been tested during the last twelve months, but with the one exception, nothing of much value was obtained. From May to November the battery was running almost full time, chiefly on low-grade ore from old stopes. Since May (when there was plenty of water for motive power to drive both the battery and rock-drills) the mine has been able to pay its way, but for the previous four months a total of £3,000 was spent out of capital for no return. Crushings: 2,330 tons 10 cwt. of general dirt and 14 cwt. 3 qr. 7 lb. of picked stone was treated for 1,787 oz. 1 dwt. of gold, value, £4,663 13s. 3d. The average number of wages-men employed were thirty-six, also twelve tributers.

*Whangapoua Claim (late Lillis's).*—This mine, which is situated on the Kauri Freehold Gold Estates property, has been steadily prospected by the present holder, P. Ryan, who has previously had fair returns from the ground, but during the past year, only a small parcel of 10 cwt. was treated at the School of Mines battery for a return of 2 oz. of gold.

*Vaughan Claim.*—This ground has been worked by the owners (Messrs. Danby and Kirk) whose attention has been directed to driving and stoping on some of the small leaders which traverse the property, and from which a small parcel of 1 ton of general ore and 6 lb. of picked stone was treated for 42 oz. 2 dwt. of gold, value, £115 15s. 6d.

*Prospero Claim.*—Prospecting-work has been continuously carried on in this ground with two men, but up to the present nothing payable has been discovered.

The Castle Rock, Ternians, and Pukewhau Claims have also been intermittently prospected, but no discoveries have been reported.

A little prospecting has also been carried on in the Manaia District, but so far without success.

*Omoho Creek.*—In the early part of the year a little activity was displayed in this locality through the discovery of gold-bearing quartz on the surface, which led to the marking-out and taking-up of several claims. It was considered the stone discovered was shed from a large ore-body at a higher elevation, and although a fair amount of prospecting by driving and trenching has been done—more especially at the Rangatira and Huruhuru Claims—I am informed no reef of a similar nature of quartz has so far been discovered. A parcel of 44 lb. of stone was treated from the Rangatira mine for 3 oz. 16 dwt. of gold, value, £10 9s.

*New Four-in-Hand.*—In the early part of the year protection was obtained for the purpose of raising capital to put in a low level to intersect the reefs that had been operated on by the company in the upper levels, and with a certain amount of success. During the period of protection, two men were employed working upon the Tainui leader, and from here good results were obtained—8 tons of quartz