

exist there. The work of pumping the shaft and providing adequate machinery will take some time and involve the expenditure of a considerable amount of capital, and the company are now engaged in arranging for the work to be done.

An impetus has been given to mining in the Tokatea Range—famous in former days for the amount of gold it produced—by the discovery by the Royal Oak Company of a gold-bearing reef on the other side of the hard bar which in the working of the claim some years ago was believed to cut off the run of gold. Encouraging prospects have been met with and some “specimen” stone obtained. From $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons of ore and 420 lb. of picked stone a return of 374 oz. 10 dwt. of gold was obtained.

At Kuaotunu mining had for some years practically ceased. During the last year, however, several of the old claims have been retaken-up, and efforts are being made to provide funds to prospect these properties at a low level. The upper portions of the old Kuaotunu mines were worked profitably some years ago, but on attempting deeper workings a barren stratum of country was met with, and, operations becoming in consequence unprofitable, the claims were one by one abandoned. The success recently attending operations in the Mountain King Mine in their low-level tunnel has again directed public attention to this portion of the goldfield as a district likely to repay investment if mining is carried on at greater depth than previously attempted, and there appears to be a probability of a successful revival of mining in this district in the near future.

Great Barrier Island: Mining is still being carried on here, but I am sorry to say it has proved far from profitable. A great deal of work has during the past few years been done upon these claims, and a very large amount of capital has been sunk in the various undertakings. The wonder is that the proprietors have not become discouraged by the long uphill struggle, and given up the attempt. They have however shown a dogged determination in spite of disappointments, and work, though with a reduced number of men, is still in progress on the island. The proprietors certainly deserve success.

On a review of the whole goldfield, it must be admitted that the amount of gold obtained during the past year is not commensurate with the work done and the capital expended. The total for the whole district, amounting to £1,302,664, certainly appears large, and bears favourable comparison with any previous year, and it is gratifying to be able to record such an addition to the wealth of the Dominion from our mines; but when we deduct from this amount the bullion won from the Waihi and Talisman Mines, £896,742 and £218,975 respectively, we reduce the yield from the rest of the goldfield to £186,947, and of this the greater portion, £144,862, is derived from the Ohinemuri portion of the district. Of the total of £38,056 derived from the mines in the Thames County and Borough £13,414 was contributed by two claims—viz., the Waiotahi (Thames), £14,716, and the Broken Hill (Tairua), £8,698. When one considers the number of mines in operation throughout the entire district, and the aggregate amount of work carried out upon them, it is easy to realise that a very large proportion of the money which is expended upon them and which maintains them in operation comes from the pockets of the shareholders. It is owing to the support afforded by persons who interest themselves in mining in this district that the vitality of the goldfield is maintained. No doubt what is done is done in the hope of ultimate reward, but all the same a word of praise is due to these people for their enterprise and perseverance. In my opinion this outlay is justified by the possibilities of success, for there is undoubtedly immense latent wealth in these mountains which can only be brought to light by a large expenditure of capital. The difficulty is that this capital is not always forthcoming, and it is impossible to open up new ground or embark in fresh mining enterprises without the assurance of financial support. During the past year a number of claims have been taken up in favourable positions on the goldfield, and efforts made to obtain the funds necessary to proceed with their development; but owing to the stringency of the money-market it is not possible to obtain the necessary capital, and in consequence very little work has been done on these claims, and what has been done has not been done to advantage.

If the operations at deep levels at the Thames to which all are anxiously looking forward prove a success, a new era of prosperity will dawn for this portion of the goldfield, reviving its former importance as a mining field. The influence of this revival will be felt throughout the whole district, reawakening interest in gold-mining, and leading to the influx of the much-needed capital for exploiting the auriferous areas which occur at intervals throughout the whole district.

It is sincerely to be hoped that in my report next year I shall be able to say that the difficulties which now beset the scheme of deep working at the Thames have been overcome by mutual concessions, that the work is in progress, and that the expectations of years are at length brought within the possibility of realisation.

I have, &c.,

F. J. BURGESS, Warden.

Mr. Warden SCOTT-SMITH, Blenheim, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Blenheim, 25th March, 1909.

I have the honour to report as follows concerning the mining district under my jurisdiction:—

Wairau Valley.—The work done at the Wairau Valley Gold-mining Companies claim has been mainly of a preliminary nature. A winze has been sunk on the Nelson reef to a depth of 70ft., and it is stated that a trial crushing of 38 tons of the stone yielded 1 oz. per ton.

To work this reef the company is putting in a low-level drive which will be between 700 ft. and 800 ft. in length, of which 340 ft. has already been driven. The company has an up-to-date crushing plant in readiness to commence work when the reef is struck.

At the Tasman's Choice claim, in Arm-chair Creek, two winzes have been sunk, and the reef struck at between 80 ft. and 100 ft. The reef averages 2ft., and a sample gave results which warranted the company proceeding with a low-level drive and arranging for a crushing plant.

Further up the valley, at the Mount Patriarch claim, a considerable amount of work has been done, both sinking and driving, and it is stated that the necessary capital is assured to put a plant on the claim at once.