

depository being found for the tailings in the worked-out portions of the flat. The treatment of 17 acres of ground varying in depth from 6 ft. to 60 ft. constituted the year's work. The average value per cubic yard was 1·88 to 3·5 grains. Twenty-five men were employed. During the first two months of the year the mine was totally idle for want of water; quarter-time was worked in the next four months, and for the remaining part of the year the mine was in full running. 174 full days' water (including Sundays) was obtained.

Argyle Sluicing Company (J. Bradbury, mine-manager).—This claim is worked very steadily, with varying success. Ground shallow.

Winding Creek Claim (Round Hill Mining Company, owners; J. Shanks, mine-manager).—The drought, unprecedented for the last three or four years, hampered this company's work to a great extent in the early months of the year. The depth of ground worked from surface to bed-rock is about 220 ft. The first 140 ft. is ground-sluced, leaving the balance to be elevated. About a quarter-acre of bottom was taken up. The auriferous wash runs in thickness from 5 ft. to 12 ft., but the best gold is found on the bed-rock. For the past two or three years the water-supply has been too limited to allow stripping and elevating to be carried on together.

Gow's Creek Sluicing Company (J. Allen, manager).—A good deal of prospecting-work has been done in the bed of the creek. As a result of this work, the company extended their water-race one mile, and purchased a complete new elevating plant. They are now engaged in opening out a paddock.

NOKOMAI.

Nokomai Hydraulic Sluicing Company (Limited) (G. Garrett, manager).—The three claims held by this company were worked as regularly as the water-supply would permit. The depth of ground varies from 62 ft. to 75 ft. Available pressure from the several water-races, 217 lb. to 278 lb. per square inch. Forty-one men employed. Work conducted in a very efficient manner.

The following information has been supplied by Inspector Green:—

ROUND HILL.

Round Hill Mining Company (Limited) (F. Hart, mine-manager).—Owing to the previous dry season and shortage of water, work in No. 1 paddock was suspended. About 16 acres have been worked in No. 1, and there is about six months' work left, after which the plant will be shifted on to the claim upstream. No. 2 paddock: Some 20 acres have been worked by hydraulic elevating, there being some twelve months' work left, after which the plant will be removed to the claim down-stream. (Both new claims have been tested by boring.) This paddock has one elevator working eighteen hours out of twenty-four. The average depth of the ground is 45 ft., and elevators are lifting 65 ft. to 70 ft. The auriferous wash occurs in seams, chiefly within 10 ft. of the bottom (diorite). In addition to the pipe-lines already in use (main line 64 chains of 27 in. and 26 in. pipes, and other lines of 120 chains), a new line of 50 chains of 18 in. 10-gauge pipes is being made at the workshops on the works. An average of thirty men usually employed. Magazine approved for storage of explosives.

Ourauera Gold-mining Company (Limited) (J. Couling, mine-manager).—Area of paddock, about 4 acres; face, 60 ft. to 70 ft.; and ground very rough, with boulder stones and buried timber. 574 ft. of new pipe-line laid. The water-driven aerial carriage stone-conveyer continues to do good work, and without it the claim would be unpayable. In common with other claims, the water-shortage is such that the paddock has scarcely been kept dry.

OREPUKI.

A. M. Dawson's Claim.—Five men sluicing on the site of old Undaunted Gold-mining Company. Magazine approved for storage of explosives, which are used for breaking up the hard clay seams overlying auriferous wash.

Fortune and Sons' Claim.—Two men sluicing. Explosives carefully handled.

Movatt and White's Claim.—This claim having been worked up to the road boundary, an adjoining property has been purchased, and future work will proceed in that direction. Explosives carefully handled.

The smelting-works erected at Orepuki some two years ago are still idle, and the expert, Mr. Wild, has left the district. As a consequence, the black-sand claims taken up along the western beach are now mostly abandoned. Little or no work was ever done on them.

DREDGING.

This branch of mining has maintained the even tenor of its way, without anything in the shape of new developments of a sensational character having eventuated. The public companies interested in this business are gradually becoming fewer, and the dredges are passing into the hands of small private parties. The state of the Molyneux River during the season has been exceptionally favourable for this work, consequently the dredges in the gorge below Alexandra have had a fairly good run. The greatest drawback to dredging in this part appears to be the inadequacy of the machines employed to cope with the changes of circumstances so easily and frequently brought about, a very small rise in the river putting the majority out of reach, and a period of enforced idleness follows until conditions are more favourable.

The most important development has undoubtedly taken place in the Waikaka Valley, where a revival is noticeable. No doubt this is the outcome of the success that has attended the efforts of Messrs. McGeorge in dealing with the deep lead long known to exist. The Waikaka United Gold-dredging Company have in course of construction a new and up-to-date machine, fitted with all the newest improve-