

Great Northern, Waihi.—Eight men have been employed prospecting and excavating the site for a battery. The stamps and greater portion of machinery are already on the site.

Golden Belt, Neavesville.—Work is confined to rising, driving, and stoping above No. 1 level. The 398 tons treated produced gold valued at £1,385 7s. Owing to the shortage of competent miners the company has been granted six months' protection.

Tairua Golden Hills.—Two men have been employed. The 152 tons treated yielded gold valued at £460 13s.

Old Hauraki Gold-mining Company, Coromandel.—Bailing and pumping were started on the 15th March, 1920, but owing to the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient supply of coal the workings were not unwatered until the 8th August. Mining was commenced and gold was found in Legge's reef between the 200 ft. and 300 ft. levels. The lode was followed in a winze, from which 45 lb. of picked stone were obtained. A connection has been made with the 300 ft. level and a few pounds of picked stone selected. The lode is of promising appearance.

Mount Welcome Mine, Tokatea.—This mine was recently taken up by a small syndicate, and driving is proceeding on the Welcome Find lode. It is proposed to crosscut and test the Harbour View lode from this level.

Four-in-Hand, Waikoromiko.—During the year three men have been employed. Work was confined to prospecting, but so far nothing of importance has been discovered.

Bonanza Gold-mining Company, Waiorongomai.—200 ft. has been driven upon the Silver King lode and 15 ft. on the Bonanza lode. The ore is highly mineralized. There are 300 tons stacked awaiting treatment when the oil-flotation plant is completed.

Muir's Gold Reefs, Te Puke.—Early in the year the mill was burnt down. Arrangements were at once made for the purchase of a 20-head stamp mill from the Barrier Reefs Gold-mining Company. Owing to the difficulty in obtaining cement the erection of the mill has been delayed. All the necessary plant is now on the site, and the mill, which will be one of the most modern crushing plants in New Zealand, will be completed in about five weeks from date. Electric power will be used, and is being obtained from the Tauranga Borough Council. This power, however, will not be available until about the end of June, owing to delay in obtaining suitable motors.

In the mine a surface crosscut has been driven and the lode intersected 100 ft. above the low level. It has been driven upon 36 ft. north and 179 ft. south in ore said to be payable. At the low level a leading stope has been taken along, passes put in, and rises connected with the intermediate level to facilitate filling when stoping is commenced. A winze has also been sunk to a depth of 35 ft. below the bottom level with the object of ascertaining water-level. The ore is said to be highly payable.

Accidents.

One fatal accident occurred during the year, in the Rising Sun Mine at Owharoa (9th August), whereby a miner named Thomas Liddell, aged forty-eight years, was killed by a blasting accident due to a misunderstanding between deceased and his mate working on the other side of the drive.

A number of minor accidents have also occurred, but none were of a serious nature.

Oil-wells.

Taranaki Oil-wells Company (Limited).—Early in February this company went into voluntary liquidation. The depths of the wells at present are: No. 2 bore—depth, 3,045 ft. The water is shut off at this depth with a string of 8 in. collar casing. No. 3 bore—depth, 4,015 ft. Oil continues to flow intermittently, but no record has been kept of its production. No. 4 bore—depth, 2,210 ft. The water is shut off at 2,149 ft. with 8 in. casing, and again with 6½ in. casing at 2,210 ft. Rotary bore—depth, 3,005 ft., with 4 in. casing. The water is shut off at 2,185 ft. with 8 in. casing, all below 8 in. having been withdrawn. The well now stands at 2,185 ft., with 8 in. casing intact.

British Petroleum Development Company, Carrington Road.—After drilling 368 ft. the sinking-tool by some means became disconnected. Attempts were made to recover it, but without success. In the meantime the capital of the company became exhausted, and the men, being unable to obtain the wages due to them, had a distress-warrant issued through the Magistrate's Court to sell the wire rope, motor-car, &c. An average of four men have been employed. The company went into voluntary liquidation on the 26th November, 1920.

Blenheim Oil Company (Limited).—The depth of Blenheim bore at the end of November was 5,725 ft. During the year 191 ft. were drilled. From 5,065 ft. to 5,590 ft. sandstone mixed with iron was passed through, and from this point to the bottom, blue claystone, which drills very slowly. Gas has always been present to a greater or lesser degree throughout the year. The bore at the time of my visit—25th November—was in good working-order. An average of three men was employed.

Waipatiki Oil-wells Company.—Depth of bore, 3,524 ft. Operations during the year were chiefly confined to taking the broken casing out of the bore. Four men were employed.

Prosecutions.

Inadequate Ventilation.—31st March, 1920: J. Hayes, mine-manager, St. Hippo Gold-mining Company; J. Caisley, mine-manager, Waitangi Gold-mining Company; A. A. Adams, mine-manager, Golden Belt Gold-mining Company. As these were the first cases of the kind brought before the Court I did not plead for a penalty, as I wished to make it publicly known that it was my intention to see that the regulations were strictly adhered to. The parties pleaded guilty, and were convicted and ordered to pay costs.

15th September, 1920: F. Sawyer, manager, Nonpareil Mine, was convicted for the same offence, and fined £5 and costs.