

Woodstock Claim (S. S. Ratliff and Party).—Three men have been prospecting this claim, and a trial crushing of 30 tons yielded bullion valued at £38 12s. 6d.

Ohinemuri Gold and Silver Mines, Maratoto (J. O'Sullivan, Manager).—Driving north and south on the Camoola lode is still in progress. The north drive has been extended 190 ft. and the south drive 352 ft. At intervals this lode has been crosscutted, showing average width to be over 30 ft.; values low.

Waiotahi Mines, Thames (H. Brownlee, Manager).—Work was recently resumed in the lowest adit level obtainable above sea-level. A number of small veins have been intersected, gold being freely seen in the quartz broken out.

Evening Star Gold-mining Company, Waiotahi Creek (J. Smith, Manager).—Owing to the capital of this company becoming exhausted work was suspended and the mine let on tribute. One ton of ore won from a small leader produced bullion valued at £34 1s. 6d.

Caledonia-Kuranui-Moanataiari Gold-mining Company (S. G. Baker, Manager).—The work of extending the south crosscut on the eastern side of the main fault has been energetically carried out during the year. Up to date 774 ft. has been driven and four reefs intersected. Unfortunately, the ore is of low grade.

Sylvia Mine, Tararua Creek (J. Benny, Manager).—Work in this mine during the year has been confined to raising and stoping on the Norfolk lode, above the low level. A rise, dimensions 11 ft. by 5 ft., and closely timbered was put up 159 ft. At this point a flow of water was met with, and the reef being of a rubbly nature, it was deemed advisable to suspend operations to securely timber the back of the rise and let it stand until the water drained off. 400 ft. above this level a surface crosscut is being extended to intersect the Norfolk lode at a point immediately over the rise. This will not only improve the ventilation, but also enable surface filling to be sent down to fill the stopes. This lode will average 6 ft. in width. The ore is heavily mineralized, and requires special treatment.

Golden Hills, Tairua (James M. Agnew, Owner).—222 tons of ore treated and won from the stopes yielded bullion valued at £600 17s. 1d.

Old Hauraki Mines, Coromandel (H. F. Shephard, Manager).—During the year some stoping was done in the Welcome Find section on a lode varying from 3 in. to 12 in. in width. Colours of gold were seen in the ore, but not in sufficient quantities to pay working-expenses. Three winzes were also sunk on the new reef immediately below No. 4 level, under where a rich shoot of ore was discovered and worked out in the levels above. The quartz occurred in bunches; no gold was seen. As the work of unwatering the shaft and reopening this mine absorbed all the subscribed capital, and an attempt to raise further capital failed, the directors decided to suspend operations, and this mine was closed down at the end of August.

New Hero Claim, Cabbage Bay Road (C. Wells and Blythe).—Two men employed crushed 36 lb. of picked stone for a return of bullion valued at £50 12s.

Royal Oak Syndicate (J. H. Fleming).—Two men are employed fossicking about the old workings, but, so far, have not located anything payable.

Iris Claim, Tiki (J. Barclay).—Two men were employed and $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons treated produced bullion valued at £21 2s. 5d.

Mahakirau.—A miner named W. Andrews, who has been prospecting this locality for about five years, discovered a small leader, from which about 20 lb. of rich specimen stone and several bags of general ore were obtained, estimated to contain £200 of gold. So far Mr. Andrews has not made any arrangements for the treatment of this ore.

Egan and Nixon, who are also prospecting this locality, treated 1 ton of ore for bullion valued at £12 15s.

Four-in-hand Syndicate, Waikoromiko.—Work in this mine has chiefly been confined to surface prospecting. 20 tons of ore treated yielded bullion valued at £96 12s.

Muir's Gold Reefs, Tepuke (Walter Dutton, Manager).—During the year an average of 116 men were employed. Breaking and development were carried on actively. The development footage for the year has been as under: Driving, 2,162 ft.; crosscutting, 273½ ft.; winzes, 83½ ft.; rises, 605 ft.; shaft-sinking, 36 ft. Of the driving, 605 ft. was done at No. 1 level, all of highly payable ore. At No. 2 level the drive north was advanced 294 ft., opening up a new block of ore 206 ft. in length, and extending up to and 20 ft. above No. 1 level; average value, £3 15s. 5d. per ton. Equipment for the sinking of a shaft to a proposed depth of 500 ft. to test the reefs at lower levels was completed in December, and the work of sinking is vigorously being proceeded with. This equipment consists of a 90 horse-power motor, air-compressors, winding-engine, and poppet-legs. The sill of the shaft is midway between Muir's reef and the large ore-body known as Fleming's lode; and, as winzes sunk on Muir's reef, 101 ft. below the low level, did not meet with any water, it is expected that this shaft will reach a depth of at least 200 ft. before water is met with. During the year 28,810 tons of ore was treated for a yield of bullion valued at £66,099 12s. 6d.

Rotorua.—Five men have been engaged prospecting at Horahora, ten miles from Rotorua, on the old Taupo Road. Four prospecting-shafts have been sunk, varying in depth from 30 ft. to 100 ft., without any sign of quartz; and, although by careful panning a few colours of very fine gold can be obtained from some of the wash taken from the banks of a small creek, this deposit will not, in my opinion, pay to work, nor would I expect reefs to exist in this locality. I might mention that this work was undertaken on the advice of a man who claims to have the power to locate gold with a divining-rod.

Quicksilver-mines.

New Zealand Quicksilver-mines, Puhipuhi.—This mine was temporarily closed down in May, pending an attempt to raise further capital. 14 cwt. 7 lb. of quicksilver was obtained during the year, valued at £231 5s.

Mount Mitchell Claim.—Held by T. A. Black and party. Operations during the year consisted of the erection of a Novak type of furnace, 21 ft. high, condensers, and ore-shed, at a cost of £2,000. The cost of the erection of this plant greatly exceeded the estimates and absorbed all the available capital. Some prospecting-work was done on this deposit at the quarry, and a face opened up, showing a thickness of 16 ft., and it is estimated, as the quarry is worked back, the ore will attain a height of 30 ft. Unfortunately, it is of low grade, and will not pay to break out and treat.

Rising Sun Mine, Puhipuhi.—The ore in this mine occurs in pockets. Very little work was done in the mine during the year, the men being engaged putting up the treatment plant designed by Mr. Bird. The retort or furnace is cylinder-shaped, constructed with closely reinforced concrete outer walls and inner walls or lining of specially designed firebrick segments, 6 in. thick, ten of which make a circle with an inside diameter of 4 ft. The furnace runs on a natural draught, the top of the chimney being approximately 60 ft. higher up than the draught-doors at the bottom of the furnace. It was designed for the treatment of mixed coarse and fine ores, and in a trial run burnt over 100 tons of this class of ore, a large quantity being of a very fine nature. Owing to the ore treated being in a very wet state the great quantity of steam passing through the condensers caused the mercury to flour, thus preventing it freeing itself from the soot, which has thickly coated the condensers. A quantity of soot taken out of the condensers is heavily impregnated with fine mercury globules, a state of things that will be remedied when dry ore and fuel is put through the furnace.

Accidents.

Fatal.—On the 24th October, 1922, a fatal accident occurred at No. 4 shaft, Waihi Mine, whereby a miner named William Edward Stephenson, aged thirty-nine years, was killed by being struck by a windlass, which fell down the shaft in which deceased and his mate, H. A. Pipe, were working.

Serious.—On the 6th December, 1922, a blasting accident, of a somewhat serious character, occurred in the Waihi Mine, whereby a miner named Charles Bennie, aged twenty-two years, had his left hand blown off above the wrist and his left eye so badly injured that it had to be removed.

Oil-wells.

Taranaki Oil-wells (Limited).—During the year this property was sold by public auction, and purchased by Messrs. Hadley and McDonald, who, I am informed, are endeavouring to raise further capital. No drilling was done. Oil produced, 5,190 gallons.

Blenheim Oil Company.—This company went into liquidation, but satisfactory arrangements have been made with the Department, by a local syndicate, to endeavour to tap the oil at 2,120 ft., where a good flow was met in sinking. At this point the 9 in. casing was cemented in, and efforts are now being made to cut it out. The members of this syndicate are sanguine that, if successful, a good flow of oil will be met with. Production, 3,500 gallons for the year.

Waipatiki Oil-wells.—Depth, 3,600 ft. No drilling has been done during the year, but two men have been employed endeavouring to free obstruction, but so far without success.