

crushed at the Golden Treasure battery, some considerable distance away from the mine. It is anticipated that, if the average of past yields is maintained, this mine should prove dividend-paying, as the company, having a half-share in a battery which is close to the mine, will make a considerable saving in the cost of carriage and crushing. The mine is well opened up, and a large body of stone exposed, sufficient to warrant the belief that it will keep the battery employed for a long time.

*Phoenix*.—Crushings have at various times been had from this mine in past years at the Golden Treasure battery, from which payable results have been obtained. The work during the past year has been the connecting of the upper with the lower levels, and placing the mine in a position to get out stone by contract.

*Golden Fleece Extended*.—The work in this mine during the year has been confined chiefly to prospecting in the lower levels by extending No. 5 level north and sinking from this and No. 6 levels. The lowest workings have now attained a depth of 860ft. from the outcrop of the lode. The ground is being worked by rock-borers, driven by compressed air. Very great enterprise has been shown by this company.

*Wealth of Nations*.—A low-level tunnel is now being driven to intersect blocks of stone formerly worked, and from which such excellent results were obtained. The distance to be driven is 800ft.

*Keep-it-Dark*.—Has now opened up the low level and proved the reef to be going down of the same payable character as in the upper levels. The existence of stone is now proved sufficient to keep the battery employed for years. The yield of gold and the dividends for the year did not quite come up to the previous year, as the battery was idle for a considerable time, during which it received a complete overhaul, and the course of the race was altered and deepened at great expense. Dividends are now being regularly declared, and there is every indication that this will continue to be done for a long time.

*Golden Treasure*.—At the machine-house great changes have been effected by the removal of some of the old and light stampers, which have been replaced by heavier ones.

In the Rainy Creek District the erection of a thirty-head battery for the Inkermann Company is nearing completion. This battery, which will be driven by steam, is a very complete one, and the most powerful on this field. It will be able to reduce over 300 tons of stone per week. In the mine the reef is of large dimensions, in fact the largest in the district. Some three or four years ago this company crushed some 2,000 tons of stone at the Rainy Creek battery, which proved to be worth a little under £1 per ton. Should future yields be of the same quality this claim should prove a payable one.

In the Devil's Creek District is situated the Globe Mine. The erection of the battery and aerial tramway in connection with this mine have been completed. Crushing has been going on for the last six months, and has proved that, although the stone is not quite so good as was expected, it is still of a payable character, and would have enabled the company to declare small dividends if it had started crushing free of liabilities. The aerial tramway has worked fairly well, and answers expectations.

*Golden Point*.—This company has during the year spent over £2,000 in working the mine, viz., £1,100 by calls, and £1,000 by gold produced. The development of this line of reef has not been profitable. Some seven or eight new quartz veins were discovered, varying from a few inches to 4ft. in thickness; none, however, proved payable. This is one of the unsuccessful new ventures. The others are the Lankey's Creek at Lankey's Creek, the Oriental at Devil's Creek, and Specimen Hill at Boatman's. The Oriental apparently requires additional crushing power to make it payable. The crushing operations of the Specimen Hill have not so far been attended with beneficial results, but it may yet come to the front after further prospecting.

The following is a summary of the revenue collected and business transacted:—

Miners' rights issued, 577; business licenses at £5, 18; business licenses at £3, 69; water-races at 5s., 3; water-races at 2s. 6d., 148; registrations at 10s., 11; registrations at 1s., 285; mining applications, 216; applications for gold-mining leases, 10; gold-mining leases granted, 95, refused, 12.

Revenue: Warden's department, £4,489 8s. 2d; Resident Magistrate's department, £250 15s.; local Land Office department, £920 14s. 3d. (the two latter showing an increase); and fees, Licensing Courts, £21 11s.

Return of Cases: Civil, 430; criminal, 136; Warden's, 59.

I estimate the population as follows: Reefton, 1,235 Europeans, 23 Chinese; Murray Creek, Black's Point, and Crusington, 620 Europeans and 4 Chinese; Boatman's, Italians, Due North, Redman's Landing, and Cronadun, 550 Europeans and 85 Chinese; Maori Gully, Devi's Creek, Slab-hut, and Merrygigs, 60 Europeans and 180 Chinese: total, 2,465 Europeans and 292 Chinese.

The yield of gold for the year is—Alluvial, 6,307oz., of the value of £23,966 12s.; gold from mines, 16,547oz., of the value of £64,456 7s. 5d.: total value, £88,422 19s. 5d.

A number of roads and tracks have been made by the County Council during the year, thus opening up the country and rendering the carriage of machinery easier and consequently far less costly. The following roads have been made, viz., up Rainy Creek, Murray Creek, Caple's Creek, and Little Boatman's Creek, as far as Low-level Tunnel. From Devil's Creek to the Big River there has been one mile of dray-road and six and a half miles of track constructed. A track has also been made from Boatman's to Larry's Creek. Another very important piece of work has now been undertaken by the Council, viz., the construction of a reservoir for fire-preventive purposes.

The current year I have every reason to believe will be much more prosperous, as many of the companies have now got over the dead work that is necessary in every mine, and are now crushing or about to do so.

I append a table showing calls made, dividends declared, &c., during the year.