

This mine is situated on the side of a high range, which is on the eastward side of McBrin's Creek, and about three-quarters of a mile southward of the junction of McBrin's and the Marototo Creeks, the latter creek being the principal branch of the Hikutaia River. The distance to the Thames Valley Road is about nine miles. There is no difficulty in getting access to this place as almost a level road can be made up the valley of the Hikutaia and Marototo Creek to the junction of McBrin's Creek. From this point a track has been constructed to the mine over a range 1,400ft. above sea-level, and then drops again 500ft. into the fall of McBrin's Creek. Instead of following this route, a good line for a track could have been got following the sideling on the east side of McBrin's Creek up to the mine. I have been informed that a company from Sydney has purchased this mine intending to carry on mining operation energetically.

McIsaac's Claim.—This claim is situated about 40 chains to the southward from the boundary of the Marototo Company's ground, and as far as yet ascertained is on the same line of reef as that company. The bullion, however, in the ore is of entirely a different quality; there is not nearly the same proportion of silver in the ore, and, consequently, it is of a much higher value. Where the reef is cut in this claim it shows to be about 9ft. in width. Two adit-levels have been constructed, one on each side of the small creek where the reefs were first discovered. In the southern adit the reef splits, and a horse of mullock comes in between. A fair prospect can be got in a portion of this reef, but to take it in a face the lode consists of too low-grade ore to pay for working. The lode has also been cut at a lower level: at the southern boundary of this claim, where it is about 15ft. in thickness. A small parcel of stone from this claim was forwarded to the Thames for treatment, and from what I could learn the bullion was worth about £2 per ounce. The gold occurs in the ore in a very freely divided state and will be difficult to save by the ordinary method of treatment. Arrangements have been made with some gentlemen in Christchurch, who agree to erect machinery, for treating the ore for a certain number of shares in a company to be formed. The remainder of the shares to be divided among the original proprietors.

O'Shea and Party Claim.—About 30 chains south from the boundary of McIsaac's claim. This party has taken up ground on the westward side of Peel's Creek, and has constructed an adit-level into the face of the hill, cutting the reef, which is about 12ft. in thickness, a portion of it carrying a fair percentage of gold.

Arizona Claim.—This claim adjoins the southern boundary of O'Shea and party's claim. An adit-level has been constructed into the hill for 100ft., and continued for 70ft. on the reef, which is about 6ft. in thickness at this point. One ton of quartz was crushed from this claim, which yielded 8dwt. of gold.

This district seems to contain a number of reefs, but as far as testing their value is concerned very little has been done. There was not sufficient prospecting done in any of the claims to justify the erection of large crushing-machinery. What is wanted in this place is a small hand- or horse-machine on the ground to test small parcels of ore at different portions along the lode, and also at different levels. By this means the value of the claims would be accurately ascertained. The character of the bullion seems to differ greatly in each claim. The further southward on the line of reef the higher the proportion of gold to silver; but in the whole of the claims the gold is found in such a finely-divided state in the ore, that not more than 33 percent. of the bullion is likely to be saved by the ordinary crushing battery process.

The outlet for the mining-claims on the south end of these reefs will be by a road constructed down the side of Peel's Creek, but it will be a far more expensive road to construct than the one to the Marototo claim as the country is more broken.

WHANGAMATA DISTRICT.

This is a district where auriferous quartz was obtained several years ago, but scarcely any work was then done. The recent prospectors—Messrs. Mackay, Kelly, Harris, and McWilliam—discovered a quartz lode on the top of a narrow ridge facing the Wairoa Creek on the east side. This claim is about six miles up the valley of the Wairoa Creek from the Whangamata harbour. This valley is very suitable for the construction of a road either to get machinery brought on to the ground or to get the quartz sent to the harbour, where it can be shipped to the Thames or Auckland for treatment.

Where the reef crops out on the surface it appears a large blow, but, nevertheless, the stone shows a fair percentage of silver, which is in the form of sulphides. At the time of my visit to the locality scarcely any work had been done beyond blasting away a portion of the large blow referred to. Since then an adit-level, 40ft. below the outcrop, has been constructed, and the lode cut through. Subsequently this adit has been extended for 30ft. along the course of the lode, and a winze sunk at the end of the adit for about 8ft., showing the lode to be about 3ft. in thickness. Gold is seen throughout the whole of the lode, but the richest portion is next the foot-wall. There was 11cwt. of lode stuff forwarded to Messrs. Fraser and Sons of Auckland, which yielded 14oz. of bullion. There is a large proportion of silver in the bullion, but I did not ascertain what its value was. Sulphide of silver can be seen very freely in some portions of the lode. Further prospecting will have to be done on this reef, and it will have to be tested at as deep levels as the creek will permit to get anything like an idea whether the lode will be permanent or whether it will cut out as it goes down.

A. Wilson and Party's Claim.—This claim is situate on the opposite side of Wairoe Stream from the Prospectors' claim, and is about 30 chains up a small creek leading into the Stream. The reef here is about 15ft. wide, which can be traced in a northerly direction for about half a mile, and in a southerly direction for a mile. Very little work was done at the time of my visit, but from what could be seen from the character of the rock, there is only about 3ft. of it that will pay for working. This portion of the lode is of a soft friable character, having a reddish appearance, which is evidently owing to the oxide of iron. Several prospects were washed during my visit, which I estimate would yield at the rate of from 8dwt. to 10dwt. of gold per ton. The gold is found in a very finely divided state, and has a light colour, indicating that it is alloyed with silver to a considerable extent.