1888.
NEW ZEALAND.

GOLDFIELDS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

WARDENS' AND WATER-RACE REPORTS.

AUCKLAND GOLDFIELDS.

No. 1.

Mr. Warden NORTHCROFT to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES.

SIR,— Warden's Office, Thames, 10th May, 1888.

I have the honour to forward herewith statistical returns for the Hauraki Mining District for the year ended 31st March last, together with a general report on the district. The latter is not as complete as I could wish, for owing to the recency of my appointment, and to the large increase of work caused by new discoveries and the general belief in their richness, and to the renewed interest taken in the field by capitalists, I have not been able to inspect the whole of the district as closely as I intended. I am glad, however, to be able to report that the depression which has for the past few years been so severely felt shows evident signs of removal. No material improvement in the production of gold has yet actually occurred, but there are strong indications that a revival in the mining industry is approaching, and a more hopeful tone prevails throughout the district than has existed for some years past. The chief causes that may be assigned for this improvement are the prospect of the establishment, in the near future, of improved and suitable processes for the extraction of gold and silver from the ore, and the introduction of English and Australian capital for the working and development of newly-discovered reefs containing complex and refractory ores, and of large areas of land, which, though believed to contain reefs of a payable character, have for years remained totally, or only partially, worked, because their development entailed the expenditure of large sums of money which could not be obtained in the district. Attention having been directed outside the colony to the existence of the auriferous and argentiferous deposits of this peninsula, I have no doubt that a further acquaintance with its mineral resources will prove that there exists a favourable field for the investment of capital; and the companies already formed are, I think, only the precursors of many others which will find profitable employment in the district.

At Coromandel, the Kapanga and Coromandel Companies, referred to in last year's report, have been energetically working their holdings, and the Kapanga Company have met with the most encouraging results. During the past twelve months 1,507 tons of quartz have been crushed for a return of 3,135oz. of gold, and there is every probability of a prosperous future. The success of this venture has given a fresh impulse to mining in the district, and created a strong feeling of confidence in its ultimate prosperity. A detailed account of the various mines at work will be found later on.

At the Thames (proper) there is very little change to notice during the past year. Work in the older mines is still being carried on to a great extent by tributers, and the return of gold is much the same as for last year. The Cambria, Saxon, Waiotahi, and Prince Imperial Mines still continue to employ a large number of men each. The result of the year's operations, with respect to the first three, have been fairly successful. The Caledonian, New Manukau, Alburnia, and Kurunui (Nos. 1, 2, and 3 have each been worked for payable returns, but the only companies that have paid dividends during the year were the Cambria, Saxon, and Waiotahi. With respect to the mines in the immediate vicinity of Grahamstown, as was pointed out in last year's report, much, if not the greater part, of the land has been worked out in the upper levels, and any further development of these mines must be in the direction of deeper sinking. This, with the question of drainage, in addition to the ordinary difficulty attending undertakings of this nature, will require the expenditure of capital which the present owners do not appear either able or willing to expend. That gold exists at greater depths, and would eventually repay the outlay necessary to obtain it, is a conviction entertained by all who have had practical experience in the mines referred to; and it is sincerely to be desired that the assistance of English capitalists, now being sought with the object of working the deeper levels, will be successful. That these mines, under the present system, may continue for years to yield small returns of gold is highly probable, but to secure a revival of their former