

The Waihi Company have, however, a property which, from the present appearance of the mine, shows that it is likely to pay good interest upon the large capital expended. During last year 7,981 tons of quartz was crushed, which yielded 34,234oz. of bullion, estimated by Mr. Wilson, the Inspector of Mines, to be worth about 12s. 4d. per ounce.

Owharoa.

There are about twelve men employed in claims in this locality, but four of these have had very little out of their claims. The Smile of Fortune Mine, worked by eight tributers, has crushed during the year 392 tons of quartz, which yielded 322oz. of gold.

The total quantity of quartz crushed in the Ohinemuri district last year was 9,572 tons, which yielded 1,279oz. gold and 42,471oz. bullion; in addition to this, 330 tons of ore were sold at the mines, which realised £4,508. The value of the bullion is estimated at £26,218. Taking the value of the gold at £2 13s. per ounce, it would amount to £3,388 7s., which, added to the value of the bullion and value of the ore sold, would make a total value of £34,114 7s. The average number of men employed about the mines in the Ohinemuri district was 311.

Te Aroha.

Very little work has been done in the mines in this district during last year, owing chiefly to almost the whole of the ground being held in large claims, on which very little work has been done. The returns furnished me by the Inspector of Mines show that only thirty men have been employed, and eight of these were employed at the tailings plant at Waiorongomai. The Te Aroha Gold and Silver Company removed their plant of concentrators—the Howell revolving furnace, rock-breakers, and the Baker's blowers—to Australia, and sold the rest of their plant to Messrs. Adams and Wicks for £3,500. The plant and claims cost the company nearly £60,000. The company, on the purchase of this property, trusted to personal information derived from people in the locality as to the quantity and quality of ore in therein; and, instead of first expending a portion of the capital in prospecting the ground, they spent it on the erection of machinery and plant. In addition to the original purchase, they expended £32,780 on additional machinery, tramways, and water-races, and when the reduction-works were completed they found that the mines would not pay them for working at the levels at which they were opened out.

Messrs. Adams and Wicks, the present proprietors, have abandoned most of the ground held by the original company, which amounted to 213½ acres, and now only hold the licensed holdings of the New Find and Silver King. There never was a goldfield opened under such favourable auspices as the Te Aroha. A large crushing plant was erected by Messrs. Firth and Clark, of Auckland, to treat the ores from the different mines, and a tramway connecting the mines with this battery was constructed by the Piako County Council, at a cost of £18,000, of which amount £9,000 was given as subsidy by the Government. Since this field was opened, about eight years ago, 40,320 tons of quartz has been crushed, which yielded 26,830oz. gold and 20,416oz. bullion, and the mines may be said to be only scratched on the surface. Very little money has been expended in prospecting since the early days of the field. There is not the slightest doubt that this will yet become a good gold-producing district when it gets developed. The best mine—namely, the New Find—on the field is on a portion of what is known as the Buck Reef, which is in places 20ft. thick, the outcrop of which extends for about three miles; and when this reef gets properly prospected other rich shots of gold will be discovered in it. The quantity of quartz crushed last year was 280 tons, which yielded 75oz. 17dwt. gold; and 1,000 tons of tailings was crushed, which yielded 441oz. 9dwt. gold.

The following tabulated statement will show the results of working the mines in the Ohinemuri and Te Aroha districts during last year, with the number of men employed, and the yield of gold and bullion from each:—