

Ravenswood Company.—This company purchased the licensed holdings known as the Mahakipawa, Jubilee, Lucky Hit, Kapai, and the Waikakaho from the original prospectors, and have been carrying on prospecting operations, testing the ground at different levels. On the Mahakipawa ground the original prospectors sunk a shaft for some distance on the lode, which showed sufficient gold to warrant the claim being properly opened out. A level has been constructed for 281ft., but the lode has not yet been struck. It is expected to cut the lode at about 12ft. further in. This level will give 160ft. of backs. On the Waikakaho ground, No. 1 level has been driven on the lode for 320ft., which varies in thickness from 1ft. to 9ft., but to take the average it would be about 4ft. 6in. This level will give 235ft. of backs when it gets under the summit of the saddle. Another level 160ft. below No. 1 has been constructed by first driving a cross-cut for 195ft. and then 200ft. along the lode. In constructing the cross-cut a lode 6ft. in thickness was gone through, showing a little gold, but the driving was continued until the second lode was cut, which is the same as that driven on in the upper level. This lode was 8ft. wide at the end of the cross-cut, but after driving 200ft. on the lode it was only 4ft. 6in. in thickness. The lode in the lower level does not show so much gold as that on the upper level; but on constructing a double pass to bring down the quartz from the upper level good gold-bearing stone was got at 50ft. up. A level has also been constructed on the lode in the Kapai ground for 157ft. The lode here varies from 2ft. to 3ft. 6in. in width, and carries good gold. The company is now engaged in the erection of a crushing plant, and an aerial tramway to convey the quartz from the mine to the battery.

Crushing-battery.—The crushing plant is to be erected near the junction of the two branches of the Waikakaho Creek, about three miles from the mine. It consists of a stone-breaker, ten heads of stamps, with two Challenge ore-feeders and four Frue vanners. The crushed ore is to pass over amalgamated copper plates and afterwards over the Frue vanners, to be then deposited in a large paddock 200ft. square, so that it can be again treated by another process if the first one is not successful in recovering a fair percentage of the gold.

Aerial Tramway.—This tramway will be about three miles in length. The steel-wire rope for the tramway has been imported from England, and weighs 10 tons. The trestles have been erected for about one mile and a half, and the tramway is expected to be completed in about three months. The topographical character of the country does not admit of the tramway being carried in a straight line as other aerial tramways are constructed in different parts of the colony, and a new principle has to be resorted to. There is to be a sharp bend in one place, where the rope and buckets will travel round horizontal pulleys. It is proposed to place about 150 buckets on the rope, of a carrying-capacity of 1½wt. each. At the terminal end of the tramway a paddock or hopper is constructed, having a capacity of 200 tons, into which the buckets empty, and from this hopper the quartz will pass down over a grizzly to the stone-breaker. The fine material and the product of the stone-breaker will fall into a second hopper, which has a capacity of 200 tons, and from the last hopper the quartz is to be fed into the Challenge ore-feeders, which in turn feed the stamps. The whole of the plant is placed on the side of the range, so that, in delivering the quartz from the tramway, it will pass through every operation by gravitation, the upper paddock being 65ft. above the floor where the Frue vanners are placed, and the second one 45ft. The tramway has not a sufficient grade—1 in 8—to be self-acting, and an overshot water-wheel 26ft. in diameter is to be erected in such a position that the waste water from the Pelton wheels can be used to drive it. The tramway will be worked by a wire rope connected with the lower terminal and the overshot water-wheel. The whole of the foundations for the battery are cut out in the solid, and provision is made to have the foundations sufficiently long, so that another ten heads of stamps can be erected if required.

Water-supply.—The water-supply is taken from the left branch of the Waikakaho Creek. A dam is to be erected in the creek, and from this the water will be conveyed to a large tank in pipes 26in. in diameter, and from the tank the same size of pipes are to be used for a short distance and afterwards steel pipes 14½in. in diameter from this to the machine-site, which is about one mile and a half from the head works, the total fall being 258ft. These pipes are now being laid in position on the ground. The estimated cost of the plant is as follows:—

Water-race and dam	...	...	...	...	£2,200
Aerial tramway	...	...	...	...	3,000
Crushing plant, &c.	...	...	...	...	2,000

Or, about £7,200

Southern Cross Company.—This company holds the ground on the south end of the Ravenswood Company's property. A great deal of prospecting work has been done, and until very recently no success was met with. Nevertheless, the work was carried on, and lately a lode from 18in. to 2ft. thick was discovered, covering good gold. In driving a cross-cut at a low level the reef was gone through without being taken any notice of, and after having driven for about 40ft. past the reef, the company then came back and opened out in a northerly direction, towards the Waikakaho licensed holding, and after driving a short distance the lode widened out and showed gold very freely. This discovery may be the means of giving a fresh impetus to further prospecting in this locality.

NELSON DISTRICT.

Collingwood.

The quartz-workings here are chiefly confined to the locality of Bedstead Gully. The Johnstone United Company has been working their mine steadily during last year, and at the time of my visit had about forty men employed, thirty of whom were working underground and ten on the surface. The lode in this mine lies nearly horizontal, but recently it has taken a sudden dip of about 1 in 4, which will necessitate a cross-cut being constructed for about 120ft. Recently an uprise was made from this level, and at about 50ft. up a very rich gold-bearing quartz lode was cut about 6ft. in width, from which, it is said, that 50oz. of gold was obtained from a dishful of stuff,