

QUARTZ-WORKINGS.

In reference to quartz-workings this may be said to be the most permanent branch of the gold-mining industry, and it is satisfactory to find that the extent of the workings is gradually increasing year after year. During the last year the returns from the Coromandel, Thames, Ohinemuri, Te Aroha, and Reefton Districts, which are the principal places where quartz-mining is carried on, show that there were 110,815 tons of quartz and 21,953 tons of mullock crushed, and 18,660 tons of tailings treated, which yielded 73,453oz. gold and 30,538oz. bullion, representing a value of £269,956; while for the previous year 95,606 tons of quartz and 21,261 tons of mullock were crushed, and 16,065 tons of tailings treated, which yielded 73,095oz. gold and 42,503oz. bullion, having a value of £251,248: thus showing an increase in the value of the production last year of £18,708. Although the quantity of bullion obtained for the previous year was more than last year, the value was only £26,325, while the bullion obtained last year was valued at £33,849. In dealing with this branch of mining I will confine my remarks to the principal localities where auriferous and argentiferous lodes are being worked.

PUHIPUHI.

There is very little more known in regard to Puhipuhi becoming a field where the argentiferous lodes can be made to pay for working than at the time of my last Statement. The reduction and extraction plant erected by the prospectors proved unsuitable for the class of ore there is to deal with on this field. This has not only disheartened the prospectors, who have spent a considerable amount of capital without getting any return, but it has also proved a great drawback to other claims being prospected, as there was no opportunity of getting the ore tested on the field, and there being no other plants nearer than Auckland and Thames, the cost of transit of the ore to either of these places makes the working of low-grade ore prohibitive. During last year two parcels of stone were forwarded to the Thames, and treated at the experimental plant at the School of Mines. One of these parcels had only an assay-value of £1 8s. per ton, but the other one of 1,900lb. of ore from the Waipu Claim showed an assay-value of £9 10s., there being 1oz. 5dwt. of gold and 33oz. 5dwt. silver, of which bullion to the value of £8 14s. was extracted, being 91·5 per cent. of the assay-value. This shows that there is ore on the field capable of being worked at a profit if there were proper appliances to treat it; but until far more prospecting has been done, and the lodes proved to a reasonable depth, it is premature to form a definite opinion as to whether this field will ultimately be the means of affording profitable employment to a large mining population or not.

COROMANDEL.

Some of the mines in the Coromandel District are not looking so well as they did twelve months ago, although the quantity of gold obtained last year was 2,383oz. more than for the previous one, which is principally due to the mines on the Kuaotunu field being better opened up and developed. The claims on the Tokatea Range still continue to contribute to the production of gold, although not to the same extent as they did in former years. The falling-off in the yield of gold is attributed to the ground being held by companies, who would not employ men on wages to work it, neither would they let any portion of it on tribute without getting a large percentage of the gross yield. The ground belonging to two companies—the Harbour View and Royal Oak—was declared forfeited by the Warden, and again taken up by other parties, and recently 184oz. of gold was obtained from 200lb. of stone taken from the Royal Oak ground, showing that, although this ground has been worked near the surface for the last twenty-six years, there are still some rich patches of auriferous quartz to be obtained.

The two English companies—the Kapanga and Coromandel—have amalgamated their properties with the Blagrove Freehold, and are working all of them now under one proprietary; but their mining operations last year were not attended with that success the proprietors deserve. Some steps have been taken to float a company to purchase the whole of the holdings on the Tokatea Range, with the view of opening up the ground and properly testing the main lode going through the range, but this scheme is said to have fallen through. During last year 855 tons of quartz was crushed from mines in the vicinity of Coromandel, which yielded 1,812oz. of gold.

KUAOTUNU.

At Kuaotunu mining operations are beginning to be carried on extensively. There are five crushing, grinding, and amalgamating plants on the field, but neither of them is of the