

of their property for pumping. At the time of my recent visit to this district the work in the Coromandel portion was carried on by a few tributers.

Kauri Syndicate's Property.—A few claims are being worked on the syndicate's property; but it does not appear that much prospecting has been done. Mr. Lanigan is still carrying on mining operations at Opitonui, but the return last year does not show satisfactory results. There was an average of six men employed in connection with the mine and crushing battery. Four hundred tons of quartz were crushed, which yielded 80oz. gold; there were also 200 tons of tailings treated, which gave 55oz. gold. This shows that the average yield of gold from the quartz was 4dwt. per ton, and from the tailings 5½dwt. per ton.

At Otonguru, Murphy and party opened out a large lode somewhat similar in character to the Try Fluke lode, being full of oxides of magnesia and iron. They have done a considerable amount of prospecting, but at the time of my visit they had suspended operations. During last year they crushed 3 tons of quartz, which yielded about 14oz. gold, and had two men employed. There is a large lode going through their claim, but unless the stone were rich it would not pay to convey it to a crushing-battery, it has to be packed on horses for a distance of about seven miles to Kuaotunu to be crushed.

Owera Company.—This company has been working and prospecting the ground for about three years, and has opened out a large lode on several levels, which has so far proved payable for working. Only the richest portion of the lode could be sent away, as it had to be taken to the Thames for treatment. During last year 30 tons of quartz was crushed, which yielded 80oz. gold, being an average of 2oz. 13dwts. per ton. The mine being on the Kauri Syndicate's property, the syndicate have in all their conditions of lease a right to have an interest in any mine after it has been prospected and proved payable, up to the extent of one-half; provided they pay the prospectors the proportionate share of the cost of carrying on prospecting operations and opening up the mine. The Kauri Syndicate, in this case, hold half the shares in the Owera Company, and have recently been the means of getting a crushing-battery of ten heads of stamps, a stone-breaker, and two berdans erected for the company, so that the lode already proved can be worked with success. A tramway connects the mine with the battery, and when the plant is complete they will be able to keep it constantly at work for a long time, provided the water holds out for supplying the motive-power. A water-race has been taken for some distance from both branches of the Owera Creek, and a reservoir constructed with a capacity of 5,500,000 gallons of water. The water is led from the reservoir in a pipe 20in. in diameter to a Pelton water-wheel, which is placed under a head of 37ft. at the battery. This plant was purchased from Mr. Adams, of Waiorongomai, being portion of the large crushing-battery formerly belonging to the Te Aroha Gold- and Silver-mining Company. Crushing was only commenced two days prior to my visit. The company now intend to take the whole of the lode out, and put it through the battery if after a sufficient trial it proves to be payable.

Mahakirau.

There are several people prospecting in this locality, and the original prospectors are still working their claim; but the returns last year show that they are only carrying on prospecting operations with two men, as only four tons of quartz was crushed, yielding about 12oz. gold.

Kuaotunu.

The mines in this locality are looking very well, and the field presents a more permanent appearance than it did on my last visit. There are numerous lodes on the field which are now being worked with payable results; and, judging from the appearance of these lodes at the different depths, and the yield of gold obtained from them, this is a goldfield capable of affording profitable employment to a large population for many years. The lodes are not rich, but they contain large quantities of ore, which, if treated by economical appliances, cannot fail to prove payable for working. There are now four crushing-batteries, of ten heads of stamps each, at work on the field—namely, the Try Fluke, Great Mercury, Red Mercury, and Mr. Curtis's battery; and there is another in course of erection by the Mariposa Company, which will also consist of ten heads of stamps. All these batteries are worked by steam power, and are within a radius of forty chains. Four of them are erected alongside the dray-road leading from the Try Fluke Mine to the ocean-beach. This road is used to cart all the quartz to the batteries, and also to bring up fuel for the engines from the ocean beach, where it is landed from vessels.

State of Road.—The road leading from the ocean-beach to the mines is at the present time in a very bad state, and portions of it in the winter months, if not repaired, will become quite impassable. A portion of it has been metalled, but there are still about one and a half miles which has not been metalled. The road being formed in a clay cutting, in wet weather it becomes a complete bog, and not fit for traffic. The number of small crushing-plants all erected, it may be said, alongside each other, requiring a staff of hands at each plant, increases the cost of crushing and extracting the gold considerably from what it would be if the whole of the plants were combined into one, and all the quartz treated at one plant. Great complaints are made about the present cost of crushing with steam power, and there are no creeks near this locality where water can be procured for motive-power.

Estimate of Electrical Plant.—The mine-owners are taking steps to ascertain if water can be got from any of the creeks or rivers as a motive-power to generate electricity to drive a crushing-battery. A deputation of the miners waited on me while at Kuaotunu, and showed me a communication they had had with Mr. Fletcher, electrical engineer, Dunedin, in reference to a plant and its cost. Two of the mine-managers on the field examined the Mahakirau Creek, and also the Waiwawa River, which empties itself into the head of Mercury Bay, at Guntown. They state