

There are only a few claims where any labour is employed beyond the working shareholders, the principal ones being the Ross United and the Mont d'Or.

The *Ross United Company* have been for years struggling for existence, and still they manage to get sufficient gold to carry on the surface workings, but have not sufficient margin of profit to give them capital to work the deep ground. Time after time have they tried to raise fresh capital, and failed, chiefly owing to the large value set upon the property. There is no doubt the company was overloaded in the first instance. So long as the nominal capital remains the same it is not to be wondered at that they cannot increase their capital to prosecute new works and get more powerful machinery. The directors are now seriously contemplating recommending to the shareholders the desirableness of reducing the original capital to £30,000, and to endeavour to increase it by an additional £30,000, in order to provide money for the erection of a powerful pumping-plant, and for sinking a new shaft, &c. This step is one in the right direction, and it is to be hoped the directors will be successful in getting the required capital, even should they receive it on preference shares.

With regard to the character of the ground in the deep levels, there is without question a considerable quantity of gold which can never be obtained without powerful pumping machinery, as the water will have to be lifted from about 200ft. under sea-level. There is, however, a tail-race constructed from the ocean-beach at as low a level as can be taken up, and the water from the pumps will be carried away in this tail-race. Very rich ground was got in Cassius' claim, the Morning Star, the Excelsior, the Old Whim, and other claims, which now form portion of the Ross United ground; and it is well known by those who were in Ross at the time when all these claims were being worked that there is a very rich block of ground round the Cassius' old shaft which was commenced to be taken out when the drainage-engine was stopped, causing all the claims to be flooded out. In the Morning Star Claim the two faces going out into the flat were, at the time the workings were suspended, averaging about 2oz. of gold to the set of timber, which would cause an excavation 9ft. wide, 7ft. 6in. high, and 4ft. wide, being equal to a capacity of $9\frac{1}{2}$ cubic yards, or 4·1dwt. per cubic yard, the best portion of the wash-drift being within 4ft. of the bottom. Rich gold has also been traced out into the deep ground as far as the water would permit at the foot of Sailors' Gully, and also in German Gully. At each of those junctions rich auriferous deposits are likely to be met with. The great difficulty in starting to work the deep ground again will be to get miners thoroughly acquainted with working this description of ground; and unless the water is pumped out in the old workings in the flat it would not be safe for men to be working any ground connected with openings from the present pumping-shaft. Neither could the workings be carried on systematically, which would entail the irretrievable loss of a large quantity of gold.

The gold obtained by the company during the year ending the 26th January last was about 1,336oz., as against 1,632oz. for the previous year. The value of the gold obtained last year would be about £5,240; of this amount £3,563 went to the tributers, and £1,677 to the company, the tribute paid being on an average about 32 per cent. to the company, the tributers receiving 68 per cent. of the gross returns. The company, however, find all plant, water, &c., which is a considerable item in the expenditure. If the actual expenditure on water-race, plant, rent, fees, and salary of working-manager be deducted, amounting to £1,360, it only leaves an actual profit to the company of £317, being equal to about 6 per cent. tribute of the gross returns.

The gold was obtained from the elevator claim in Ross Flat, and also at the elevator claim at Donoghue's, both of which belong to the company, the former claim yielding about 844oz. and the latter 359oz., and the balance was obtained by sundry tributers working on the upper levels. The actual receipts for the year was £1,615 for tribute and £117 for sales of water, making their income for the year £1,732; while their expenditure in connection with the claim, including the salary of the mine manager, was £1,360, and in connection with the management outside of the claim the expenditure was £425, making the total expenditure £1,785.

The value of the ground worked is obtained from the yearly report of the mine manager, Mr. Joseph Grimmond, who states there were 67,350 cubic yards of wash-drift treated from the Ross elevators, which yielded 843oz. 12dwt. of gold, representing a value of £3,290 4s. This is equal to a yield of about 6gr. of gold, or nearly 1s. per cubic yard. This must be considered very rich ground, as the face they are working is fully 80ft. in height. The face of the claim at Donoghue's is more variable, and the material is not all taken from one place, so that the manager has found it difficult to give the quantity lifted at this place.

Mont d'Or.—This is a hydraulic sluicing company, and their mining property is the best at the present time in the district. The company has for many years been a regular dividend-paying one, the shareholders having received £18,000 in dividends, and the ground is likely to last for the next thirty years and give equally good returns. During last year 1,332oz. of gold was obtained, representing a value of £5,171. The whole of the auriferous drift in this company's claim is of a much older deposit than upper-drift gravels on Ross Flat, and belongs to the same age as the drift-wash on the top of Mount Greenland, and that found on the lower bottoms in Ross Flat. The gold found in the drift is generally well rounded and water-worn, and in many instances rolled in small scales. All the stones in the wash-drift also indicate that they have been turned over and over by the action of a flowing stream. There is nothing in the locality to lead one to suppose that ever this deposit was the result of glacial action, but there is plenty of evidence to show that the surface of the land is greatly altered since the deposit was made. Fossils of large fish have been found close to Ross, at about 400 feet above sea-level; while the auriferous deposits on the lowest bottom worked on Ross Flat is about 240 feet under sea-level, thus showing that the ground in this locality has been elevated and depressed several times and at different periods. There is a large area of auriferous drift on the range leading towards Mount Greenland, but it is at too high an elevation to get a good supply of water to work it, and it can only be made payable by working the ground on the hydraulic sluicing principle.