

very largely to the gold returns for the year. The Whau, however, which is a private claim, is producing handsome returns to its four owners. Among the other mines at work are the Victoria (which has absorbed the Prince Imperial), the Trenton, New Manukau, Dives, and Alfred. In the Tararu district a large amount of work has been done, particularly on the Sylvia Mine, which has succeeded in treating the large quantities of concentrates which had been stored, awaiting the completion of the Cassell plant, which has been added to the already extensive machinery described in previous reports. Work in the mine is at present principally confined to the low level just recently commenced, and which will have to be constructed for a distance of about half a mile. It is confidently expected that, when this extensive work is completed, the mine will produce large yields of bullion. Dixon's Extended Company, who have a crushing-plant of their own, are at present working their mine on a system of tribute with successful results. The Norfolk have done a large amount of work, but the results have not been as satisfactory as they might owing to the impossibility of treating the refractory ores with their present plant. A little prospecting has been done in other parts of the district, particularly in the upper portion of the creek.

MAROTOTO AND WHANGAMATA.

This part of the field is not altogether abandoned. There are still a few who have faith in its ultimately coming to the front, and continue prospecting the different creeks and ridges; and it would not surprise me to hear any day of a good payable reef being struck. The Goldwater is still being worked at Whangamata, and though there are a great many nice-looking reefs, they are all more or less of a complex nature; this, coupled with the fact that the Thames is the nearest place at which ore can be treated, is sufficient in itself to prevent the place developing much further at present.

KARANGAHAKE, OWHAROA, WAITEKAURI, AND KOMATA.

Karangahake at present is a very busy place owing to the extensive operations being carried on at the Crown Company's mine on tramway, water-race, and excavations for their new plant. The water for the race is taken from the Ohinemuri River, and carried 85 chains in the ordinary fluming to the plant. It will be a very complete and capable race, and has taken over 180,000ft. of kauri timber in construction. The tramway is 80 chains in length, running from the Crown Mine to the site of their reduction-works, and has been a difficult and trying undertaking, a great deal of the cutting being the face of the Waitawheta Gorge cliff, but it can now at any time be extended up the valley; and, as the company intend to crush and treat for the public as well as their own mines, it will be of great advantage to the whole district. The Crown Mine is well opened up, and, so far as one can judge, should be a good paying mine. Their lode is a strong one, and so far, improves as it goes down. They certainly deserve to succeed, for they have done more to advance and open up this district than was ever before attempted. They have not confined themselves to opening and developing quartz-lodes, but have built a tramway and water-race, and are erecting a plant and constructing works of a magnitude never before undertaken in this district. The other mines in this part of the district are waiting till the Crown plant is finished, when they hope, by using the Cassell process, to save the largest percentage of the precious minerals contained in their ores. Should this process be able to do all that is claimed for it there will be a large increase in mining in this locality before my next annual report.

The only mine that may be said to be working at Owharoa is the Smile of Fortune, which is entirely worked by tributers, who do fairly well.

At Waitekauri, Mr. T. H. Russell's mine and battery have of late been idle, the ore not paying. This is a great pity, as Mr. Russell has expended a very large sum of money on both.

The Jubilee Special Claim, belonging to Mr. Kersey Cooper, is being well opened up, and at present there are all the evidences of vigorous vitality. A tramway over 70 chains in length, between the mine and the battery, is being constructed, and as soon as it is finished crushing will commence. It is anticipated that the mine will more than keep the battery going when they once start, but Mr. Cooper, to guard against unforeseen contingencies, has a reserve of over 500 tons of ore.

The Komata new find. These reefs were discovered by a prospector named William D. Tilsley last June, who, with his mates, marked out and had granted to them the Te-ao-Marama licensed holding. This they have since sold to Mr. T. H. Russell, who is now connecting the mine by tramway with his Waitekauri battery. The tramway is in an advanced stage, the track cut, and most of the sleepers on the ground.

WAIHI

The principal work here is carried on by the Waihi Company, their almost inexhaustable reef in the Martha Special Claim—the largest in New Zealand—employing a great number of men. The tons and tons of ore that have been shot out of this magnificent reef, trucked to and treated in their splendid plant, have hardly as yet made any appreciable difference to its vast resources; but with all this ore in sight the future is being cared for. A new level is being opened up by a very complete tunnel, similar to the Moanataiari, 5ft. 10in. at top, 7ft. at bottom in width, and 7ft. in height, to allow of a double line of rails. It has now been driven about 500ft. in soft, heavy country, and has yet about 900ft. to go, but the ground is very good and standing well, the cost only being 8s. 3d. per foot. This new level will give about 50ft. of backs below their present workings, and the reef being from 20ft. to 50ft. wide, the quantity of ore can better be imagined than calculated. This alone not satisfying the company, they have opened a new level in the Union shaft, about 50ft. down, and cut the reef with very promising results, the reef being from 2ft. to 4ft. thick, of a good class of ore, and showing gold freely. So satisfied are the company with it that they now intend to open another level 80ft. deeper. Since my last report this company have adopted a wet process for treating a portion of their ore in addition to their dry process. The building containing the tanks for their wet or reticulation process is 110ft. by 60ft., the tanks occupying about 100ft. of