

Cumberland.—During the year the stone between No. 2 and No. 1 levels has been stoped out. An incline shaft has been sunk to a depth of 78ft., at which depth considerable difficulty was experienced in finding the reef, left underfoot in No. 2 level. The reef was broken, and apparently did not live down to this depth. All the payable stone on this, the original, reef has been stoped out to No. 2 level. A cross-cut having been put in to the south from the bottom of the shaft, a reef was struck after driving about 40ft. This reef is small, averaging on the level about 18in., but is of good quality, and has been driven on for a distance of 109ft. A winze has been sunk on the stone to a depth of 45ft., the stone being of an average thickness of about 2ft. For the year 3,968 tons of quartz have been crushed for a yield of 2,068oz. of gold, valued at £8,825 2s. 4d., from which the shareholders have received £2,400 dividends. From the opening of the mine to date 11,550 tons of quartz have been crushed, for a yield of 9,810oz. gold, which realised the sum of £40,233 2s., out of which £13,200 have been given in dividends.

PAINKILLER.

Sir Charles Russell.—The low-level tunnel was driven about 690ft., and rising from this point for about 60ft. the reef sunk on from the upper level was struck. On this intermediate level a tunnel has been driven on the line of reef for about 150ft., but it has not been continuously on stone. A small crushing recently yielded a little over an ounce to the ton. The average width of the stone is about 18in. A contract has been let for the erection of a small battery.

CRUSHINGTON.

Keep-it-Dark.—The inside shaft has been sunk a further depth of 125ft., which makes it 375ft. in depth, or 850ft. from the brace of the main shaft. A tunnel is now being driven from the bottom of the inside shaft to intersect the reef, which, if it lives down, should be struck in about 30ft. The country through which the tunnel is being driven is at the present time of a favourable character. In the No. 1 level from the main shaft a prospecting drive has been put in for a distance of 170ft., but no stone of any consequence was met with.

No. 2 South Keep-it-Dark.—This company during the last year has been opening up a new level. The main shaft has been sunk 175ft. The cross-cut from the bottom of the shaft to the line of reef (150ft.) has been completed. The level is being extended. Up to the present time the north level has been driven 200ft., but, so far, no solid body of quartz has been met with. As the reef, which was worked on the No. 2 level, had a strong northerly strike, some distance may yet have to be driven before it is found on the deeper level. South of the cross-cut the level is being driven into the old Pandora ground; the distance driven up to date is about 90ft. It is the general opinion that a good block of stone will be found in this direction, as some good stone was disclosed on the bottom of the No. 2 level, about 200ft. south of the main shaft. If this block should live down, it would give over 200ft. of backs from the level which is now being driven.

Hercules.—After driving about 180ft. from the bottom of the shaft on No. 8 level without striking the reef, an uprise was started and carried up 62ft., when the reef was found. This block of stone was from 4ft. to 5ft. wide, and proved profitable to the company, enabling dividends to the amount of £1,500 to be declared. After this block was worked out, prospecting was carried on to find if the stone lived down between the point where it was first struck in the uprise and No. 8 level, but, so far, stone has not been found. A trial crushing of the stone sunk upon in the winze from No. 7 level near the No. 2 South Keep-it-Dark Company is now being taken out. This reef is between 3ft. and 4ft. wide, and if this crushing proves payable No 8 level will be extended to cut this block.

Wealth of Nations.—During the last twelve months the 350ft. level has been extended 70ft. north, and a connection made with the block of quartz which was found in an intermediate level 50ft. below the 200ft. level. As there was some difficulty in finding this block in the 350ft. level, a second winze had to be sunk on the reef, which proved the existence of a bar of hard sandstone rock throwing the reef a considerable distance out of the usual underlie. This reef has been worked for the last eight months. The average yield is poor, about 6dw. of gold per ton; but even this is payable, and a dividend amounting to over £800 has recently been given. A winze is at present being sunk on the reef below the 350ft. level, and is down 66ft. on what is supposed to be a strong body of quartz. A cross-cut is also being driven east on the 200ft. level to prospect for a reef which existed in that direction in the upper levels. This company is very properly pushing ahead the thorough prospecting and opening of the mine out of the proceeds of crushings.

GENERAL.

An effort is being made to amalgamate the properties of the Inangahua Low-level Tunnel, Venus, and Royal Companies, and to form a new company to push ahead the old Low-level Tunnel. It is to be hoped that the promoters will be successful, as the striking of payable stone at this level would be of the greatest benefit to the district. The Exchange, which adjoins the Cumberland, is now at work, having obtained permission from the latter company to work from one of their levels. The Sir Francis Drake has been to great expense in opening a new level and erecting winding machinery. There have been a few crushings, but, unfortunately, the stone is very poor. The Fiery Cross Company sold their mine, which was purchased, and is now being worked, by a party of working miners, who are likely to give a good account of the mine. The treatment of tailings by the Boatman's Tailings Company by the cyanide process has not, so far, met with the success their enterprise deserved, but recent operations have been profitable, and will doubtless continue so as the peculiarities and refractory nature of the tailings become better known.

The striking of payable stone, now being prospected for in the low levels of the Keep-it-Dark, Welcome United, No. 2 South Keep-it-Dark, Globe, and Hercules, would greatly tend to revive interest in the mining industry.

In conclusion, I must thank managers of companies for information kindly given by them.

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The Under-Secretary of Mines, Wellington.

H. A. STRATFORD, Warden.