GOLD- AND SILVER-MINING.

The great increase in the number of claims taken up during the year 1896–97 led to the flotation of many companies, both in New Zealand and in London. In consequence, many of those companies that attempted to open up new mines with insufficient capital have expended all their funds, and in a large number of instances the claims and holdings have been abandoned.

This has caused a considerable falling-off in the prosecution of mining operations during the past year, and the work done has not proved of the great advantage to the industry that was expected. Large amounts have been expended in prospecting and searching for reefs in places where the indication of the existence of gold-bearing quartz was absent. In other parts, where reefs were discovered with fair prospects of yielding payable quartz, works were carried on in development in a half-hearted manner, and in many instances of such questionable utility, that claims have been abandoned at a time when, had the expenditure been carried out in a more judicious manner, the results would probably have proved the existence of payable mines. The desire to erect machinery to test quartz before the mine developments warrant such expenditure, is a failing frequently attendant on gold-mining in different parts of the world, and it must be admitted that instances of this kind have tended to disappointment in the New Zealand goldfields during the past year.

The good work carried on by many of the mining companies in conducting operations on a sound and practical basis, with skilled and careful management, will, however, lead to the steady expansion of the industry, and to an increase in the number of payable mines.

The following statement of the quantity and value of gold entered for exportation during 1897–98 shows the continued importance attached to the industry:—

Name of District.	Year ended 31st March, 1897.		Year ended 31st March, 1898.		Increase for 1898.
	Oz.	£	Oz.	£	Oz.
Auckland	93,876	358,231	108,490	401,602	14,614
Marlborough	789	3,070	619	2,400	..
Nelson	2,534	9,544	758	2,853	..
West Coast	71,548	286,261	66,121	264,481	..
Otago	88,166	358,636	75,504	304,862	..
Totals	256,913	1,015,742	251,492	976,198	..

In the Auckland District there was an increase of 14,614 oz. of gold—from the Thames County, 73 oz., and from the Ohinemuri County, 26,617 oz. Coromandel County shows a decrease of 10,692 oz.; Piako County, 35 oz.; and Borough of Thames, 1,349 oz.

In the South Island, Marlborough showed a decrease of 170 oz.; Nelson, 1,776 oz.; West Coast, 5,427 oz.; and Otago, 5,421 oz.

The yield of gold is nearly equal to that of last year, the difference being a slight decrease compared with the returns for 1897. Most hopeful anticipations must be formed of a substantial increase in the value of the yield of gold for next year, consequent on the addition to quartz-crushing machinery and to the number of dredges and improved hydraulic appliances in the alluvial fields.

QUARTZ-MINING.

The great impetus given to quartz-mining by the judicious expenditure of capital in the development of mines and erection of machinery, will show that many companies are now established on a sound basis, and the properties are most valuable investments. The profits to be derived will not probably be in some instances such as shareholders would wish, but it must be borne in mind that over-capitalisation is responsible to a large extent for a smaller rate of dividend than would have otherwise obtained.

The following list of companies outside the colony connected with New Zealand mining shows the vast interest taken in developing the industry:—

Name.	Locality in which Operations are being carried on.	Share Capital.	British Office.
		£	
Anglo-Continental Gold Syndicate (Limited)	General	100,000	Austinfriars, London.
Anglo-New Zealand Mines Investment	"	100,000	54 and 55, London Wall.
Apakura Syndicate	"	1,800	10, Bloomfield Street.
Aroha Gold-mines	Aroha	100,000	30 and 31, St. Swithin's Lane.
Achilles Goldfields	Otago	100,000	11, Poultry, E.C.
Blagrove's Freehold Gold-mining Company	Coromandel	62,500	97, Dashwood House, E.C.
Blue Spur and Gabriel's Gully Consolidated Gold Company	Otago	130,000	6, Great St. Helen's.
Britannia (Hauraki) Gold-mining Company	Coromandel	100,000	34 and 36, Gresham Street, E.C.
Collingwood Goldfields	Collingwood, Golden Bay	150,000	46, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.
Colville Company	Coromandel	7,500	7, Drapers' Gardens, E.C.
Consolidated Goldfields of New Zealand	Reefton	225,000	30, St. Swithin's Lane.
Coromandel Exploration Syndicate	General	2,000	6, Great St. Helen's.
Cromwell Gold Company	"	100,000	54, Old Broad Street, E.C.
Dolcoath Gold-mining Company (Hauraki Peninsula, New Zealand)	Coromandel	150,000	142 and 143, Palmerston Buildings, E.C.
Dual Syndicate	General	10,000	3, Clement's Lane, E.C.
East Hauraki Gold-mining	Coromandel	100,000	Finsbury House.
Ethel Reef Gold-mining Company	Te Aroha	120,000	Dashwood House E.C.