

dealt with in the report containing the description of the blocks reserved for mining purposes (Mines Reports, 1896, C.-9), and Block LIII., within which is situated the part of Boatman's Creek forming the subject of this report, is described at page 4 of the report in question (*q.v.*).

"That portion of the valley of Boatman's Creek which is under consideration has a creek-channel of moderate width, in and along which lies a considerable amount of drift timber. The immediate banks are bare, while the flat ground intervening between the water-course and the hill-slopes are covered by standing timber or tree-stumps, and the presence of these will compel the adoption of special methods of working the auriferous deposits that underlie.

"As bearing on the matter of this report might be raised the question of the auriferous character generally of the 'Old-man bottom.' This has been dealt with sufficiently in the introduction to the description of the blocks reserved for mining purposes above cited, and in the reports for the year 1895, for which see Mines Reports, 1895, C.-13, 'On the Geology of the South-west Part of Nelson and the Northern Part of the Westland District.'"

GREY DISTRICT.

Blackball District.

Minerva Mine, Blackball, Grey Valley (Area, 96 acres).—During the past twelve months the owners took out a crushing of 90 tons, for a yield of 14 oz. of gold; value, £48. This not proving payable, the company, disheartened by losses and being £600 in debt, applied for and obtained six months' protection. When this ended, on preparing for a renewal of work, it was found that the water-wheel had collapsed and the pump was damaged. The company is now preparing for the erection of a Pelton wheel and a new pump. Meanwhile one man is prospecting a gold-bearing leader at the surface.

Garden Gully Mine.—This mine has been lately disposed of to the Garden Gully Gold-mining Company (No Liability). During the twelve months the company has not succeeded in developing any lode showing payable prospects. In a tunnel driven two years ago a drive was extended 100 ft. along a formation bearing gold, but not payable. Surface prospecting was carried on, disclosing the fact that everywhere, by washing surface, colours of reef gold are obtained. The company has had a winze sunk 50 ft. on a lode about 30 in. in width; the stone yields colours by crushing, but nothing payable. The reef was followed all the way down, and at the bottom of the winze maintains the same width of 30 in. Water is now interfering with the work of sinking at a reasonable cost. As a whole, the claim presents possibilities of fair development, and reef indications everywhere. The tracks of the quartz lodes in this claim are very long, and, although no payable gold exists just now in the tunnel driven on one lode and in the winze sunk on another lode, there is always a fair chance of getting at a chute of payable stone on a gold-bearing reef at any time.

Paparoa Ranges.

Croesus Mine.—This property is situated at a high elevation on the range, and consequently operations in the mine are much hindered, especially in the winter months. The reef, where it outcrops at the surface, is opened by a winze sunk to a depth of 40 ft., the quartz presenting a compact body of stone 4 ft. in width. Further sinking had to be abandoned on account of water; therefore a cross-cut was driven to further open up the reef and drain off the water. This cross-cut penetrated the reef at a depth of 100 ft. from the surface, where the reef was found to be 2 ft. 6 in. in width, and in driving a level the quartz reef varies from 2 ft. to 5 ft. in width. About 60 tons of quartz from this level are stacked at the entrance to the tunnel, and, as gold is visible throughout the stone, a payable yield may be expected. Another cross-cut, 68 ft. in length, is being continued in order to intersect another reef about 2 ft. in width at a depth of 160 ft. from the outcrop. Favourable prospects are also obtained from the portions of the reef exposed on the surface. Mining timber is a very expensive item, each set costing £1 5s. A battery is now in course of erection at the left-hand branch of Blackball Creek, and the quartz is to be conveyed from the mine by an aerial tramway 120 chains in length. This is nearly completed.

Poneke Claim.—A cross-cut has been driven 250 ft., but so far no lode has been cut in the drive. This tunnel will be continued to 500 ft.

Homeward Bound Claim.—A small leader carrying gold has been cut in a cross-cut driven 60 ft.

Red Lion Claim.—Prospecting on the surface is being carried on in this, and also in the Alpha, Zealandia, Triple Alliance, and Imperial Claims.

Taffy Claim.—Several reefs and leaders have been discovered, and in one of these, 3 ft. in width, gold can be seen in the stone.

Imperial Claim.—Surface-prospecting only has been done.

Moonlight District.

Prospecting was carried on in the Paparoa and Prophet Claims. In the former nothing of importance has been found, but in the Prophet a formation of slate and quartz 6 ft. in width shows a little gold at the surface, and a tunnel is being driven to cut this at a lower level.

Daring's Wonder Claim.—A reef, 2 ft. in width, was discovered on the surface, and a tunnel will be driven to cut the reef at a lower level. Gold can be seen in the stone on the surface.

Langdon's District.

The Julian Mine and eight other claims are under option to Mr. E. C. Mills, who is now in London.

The *Victory Mine*, owned by Curtis Brothers, continues to yield payable quartz. 255 tons yielded 240 oz. 7 dwt.

Prospecting was carried on in several of the claims taken up in this district, but the expectations of those interested have not been realised.