

evidently acquired a very valuable property, and, as it is under capable management, it should prove a remunerative investment.

*Rotokoku.*

The Saxon No. 1 and No. 2 Special Claims have been taken over by an Auckland company. A good deal of development work has been accomplished, with considerable success.

*Imperial.*—Little work of importance has been done. More capital seems needed, and energetic measures taken to fully open the mine, which has every promise of becoming a payable one.

*Owharoa.*

The Ohinemuri Syndicate, after having spent a considerable sum of money, appear to be on the road to success. They have discovered two or three very fair reefs, giving good prospects. A few more months should decide the future of the mine.

*Waihi.*

The Waihi Gold-mining Company has shown marked advancement during the past twelve months. Since the Victoria mill started the output per month has hovered between £22,000 and £25,000 odd. It is now contemplated to increase this mill with another fifty head of stamps, for which the foundations are now being prepared. The two new levels opened in the mine on the Welcome and Martha have turned out remarkably well, and have conclusively proved that the ore considerably improves at the deeper levels. In some of the stopes in the No. 4 level the reef measures 50 ft odd in width. This probably is the richest mine in the Southern Hemisphere, and the management deserve great credit for the manner in which so many great works in connection with it have been carried out. The company employ about eight hundred men, and this does not include men working on various contracts, such as firewood-cutting, &c.

The Union Waihi Gold-mining Company's properties, which adjoin those of the Waihi Company, and are under the same management, have been most thoroughly and systematically prospected and opened up. It is the intention of this company, I am informed, to erect fifty head of stamps during the present year, to enable them to start crushing. There are two or three good reefs to work on, and I do not doubt that the company will be successful.

The Grand Junction Gold-mining Company have been able to do very little work indeed, owing to the main shaft in the east end being flooded. It is now considerably over eighteen months since the company struck the Waihi Company's lodes, and it is most difficult to follow the ideas the management have had in view. Seeing the great prospects before this mine, in that they have cut the Waihi lodes in both the eastern and western sections, it would be thought a vigorous policy would have been pursued, and active steps at once taken to have proper pumping plant erected. A new manager has now arrived from England, and I have no doubt an opportunity will be given to prove the mine's value.

*Waihi-Silverton.*—The Waihi-Silverton Company have scarcely realised anticipations. Active work has proceeded during the year, and a large amount of work done in opening up the mine. The mine itself shows every indication of improving. I am informed that the new reef which was struck a month or so ago is turning out very well. This company deserve every success, and I trust ere long may be returned amongst those yielding good returns.

*Waihi Consols.*—The Waihi Consols Company are sinking a shaft, but as yet have met with little of importance.

*Waihi South.*—The Waihi South Company have done little work. They have purchased the old Welcome ground, and intend shortly starting active work.

The Ohinemuri and Waihi Extended are being prospected by drilling holes with the diamond-drill.

The Favona Company have run out of capital, and is only being worked with a few men.

At the Waihi Beach very little work has been done. An option has now been taken over the property, and, as several new reefs have been discovered, there is a good chance of active work being carried on on this property.

*Waitekauri.*

*Waitekauri.*—The Waitekauri Gold-mining Company have made good progress, and is the second mine in the district. The mill has now practically been converted to a wet crushing one, with great success, as the monthly returns prove. The company intended erecting a new fifty-head mill at the Cross. In the mine itself two new shafts have been put down, and the mine is being thoroughly opened up. This company has now acquired the Grafton Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Special Claims, the old Kathleen Beehive, as well as several others, and altogether own a very large tract of country. In the Te Aomarama section development works of an extensive nature have been carried out with success.

In the Grace Darling very little work has been done; but I am informed that a company has been formed, and a mill is to be erected at an early date.

*Waitekauri Cross.*—This company has spent a large sum of money in developing their property. A shaft has been sunk and a good deal of driving towards the Cross end accomplished. The ore has improved in value, but is not as yet payable. An expensive water-race from the Whakamoehau Stream has been constructed. The company are deserving of every success, as they have expended a large sum of money.

*Waitekauri Extended.*—The Waitekauri Extended Company have not made a great deal of progress. The ore has been very low grade, but, I am informed, has lately improved considerably. The battery has not run continuously, owing to shortage of water. It would seem that to keep the mill continuously employed an auxiliary steam-engine is absolutely necessary. Should the value of the ore show any improvement, the company has good prospects of turning out a payable one.