

TAPU.

Mahara Royal.—This ground is held by an English company, who have done a large amount of work in developing the different reefs discovered on the property. In the early part of the year operations were directed in extending the low level, driving and stoping on the Royal reef at No. 3 level, and driving on the foot-wall of the Fluke reef. In the low level the reef has now been intersected and driven on for a distance of 50 ft. The reef varies from 5 ft. to 8 ft. in width, the quartz being of a very kindly description, and assay-tests taken from time to time have given good payable results. In the Fluke section a cross-cut is being driven to cut the Fluke reef, and is now in a distance of 137 ft. The reef is expected to be intersected now at any time. The Shannon ground has now been acquired by this company, and in this section an adit-level has been driven to intersect the Shannon reef, and this reef is now being driven upon and looks most encouraging, as gold can be seen in the quartz as it is broken out. The company have had an additional ten-stamp battery erected, which is now completed and has started crushing. This is a very complete battery, and comprises twenty stamps and sixteen berdans. The company is now in a position to treat a large tonnage of ore, and, as the reefs met with in the low levels are good, the prospects of the company for the year now entered upon may be considered exceedingly encouraging. The company crushed 2,488 tons, for 1,556 oz. 9 dwt.; value, £4,230 15s. 9d. An average of thirty-three men were employed on this property during the year.

Sheridan Mine.—Operations were carried on continuously till the month of January, when work was stopped. The company did a large amount of prospecting work in opening up the reefs at the different levels. At the low level a rise was put up on the reef to a height of 195 ft. to connect with No. 3 level, which was the means of giving good ventilation throughout the workings, and opened up a considerable block of ground on the reefs. The reefs varied from 3 ft. to 6 ft. in thickness, but the quartz crushed did not produce sufficient gold to cover the working-expenses, and last month the mine and battery were sold. 276 tons of ore was treated for 105 oz. 17 dwt. of gold. Nine men were employed.

Little Jessie Mine.—A good deal of work of a prospecting nature has been done on this claim during the year, and a parcel of 32 tons of quartz treated gave 4 oz. 11 dwt. of gold. Two men were employed.

Prospecting operations have been carried on in the City of Santa Rosa, Golden Horn, Comet, and Golden Point Claims. Small parcels of ore were treated, but not any of a payable nature, and so far nothing of importance has been found in those claims.

WAIOMO.

Monowai Mine.—This mine has been continuously worked during the year, and a considerable amount of money has been spent on ground tramways, water-races, additions and alterations to battery and cyanide plant. Experiments have been carried on for some time to ascertain the best method for the treatment of the ore, it having been tried by amalgamation and concentration; but, the trials not being satisfactory, the cyanide process is again being tried, and, it is said, with better results. This is to be adopted, and the plant fitted up for the cyanide process. In the Monowai section, the reef at No. 3-B level is a very large body of quartz, and has been driven on the foot-wall side of the reef for a distance of 680 ft. Cross-cuts have been put through the reef in several places in this drive, and found to be from 25 ft. to 30 ft. in thickness. Rises have been put up, and connections made with No. 2 level. This has given good ventilation, and provided facilities for working out the blocks of ground to good advantage, as the quartz from the upper levels can now be run down the passes to the low level, which is connected with the battery by a ground tramway and run into the mill, a distance of a mile and a quarter. In the Gem section, the Crown and Gem reefs have been opened up to a considerable extent, but the quartz crushed from here was low grade, and not payable. This section has also been connected with the battery by a ground and incline tramway three-quarters of a mile in length. 963 tons of ore has been treated for 126 oz. 4 dwt. of gold, value £347 1s. Forty men have been employed.

Broken Hill Mine.—This mine has been continuously worked. In the early part of the year operations were confined to opening up the reef at the No. 1 and No. 2 levels, where there is a well-defined body of quartz, from which, it is said, payable assay tests have been obtained. The work in progress at present is cleaning out and retimbering the low level which has been standing for some time and has partially collapsed. From two to four men have been employed in this mine.

Comstock and Paraquet.—A little prospecting work has been done on those mines at intervals, with two and four men on each, but nothing of importance discovered.

PURU.

Puru Consolidated.—A large amount of work has been done on this property in developing the reef at the different levels. In the No. 1 level the reef has been driven on for a distance of 386 ft., which varies from 1 ft. to 2 ft. in width; and in the No. 2 level the Rimu reef has been opened up to a considerable extent, stoping operations done, and rises put up to No. 1 level, a height of 70 ft. Crushing was carried on from the month of June till December, but it was found there was not sufficient gold in the quartz to pay, and in consequence the battery was stopped. 944 tons of general dirt and 20 lb. of picked stone was crushed, for a return of 163 oz. 1 dwt. of gold; value, £489 3s. There have been seven men employed on the property.

Prospecting operations were carried on for a time with two men on the Big Reef Claim, but nothing of a profitable character discovered; and most of the other claims taken up in this district have been abandoned.