

want of water-power to drive their battery. The long dry season has been much felt by mining companies; it has, however, shown them that if they intend to crush continuously they must be prepared to supplement their water-power with steam, as the former cannot be depended upon for the purpose. It affords me much pleasure to report that this company are said to have come across much richer ore than they have hitherto been working. I trust this may prove to be the case, as this company deserves some return for the many thousand pounds it has expended on the property.

The Maratoto Gold-mining Company have now finished the erection of their battery, and should shortly be crushing. A considerable amount of development-work has been carried on on this property. A considerable parcel of ore was shipped to England for treatment, which was expected to yield £20 per ton. If this expectation is realised the shareholders will be owners of a good mine, which should very materially add to our gold output during the next twelve months.

*Waitekauri Cross Gold-mining Company.*—Nothing of importance can be recorded about this mine; the company have so far met with no success. The mine at present is under protection. It is difficult to predict the future of this mine, as no works of any importance have been undertaken.

A small syndicate are prospecting the Advance Special Quartz Claim at Maratoto, formerly held under license as the Retreat Special Claim. Reports are in circulation as to the extremely encouraging prospects that are being obtained.

*Waitekauri Gold-mining Company.*—Very extensive mining operations have been carried on by this company during the past twelve months upon its various properties, and a considerable addition has been made to the area held by it, consisting of ground formerly taken up by others during the boom, but since abandoned, and the purchase of the claims formerly held by the Waitekauri Union Gold-mining Company. The total area of its holding amounts to 1,800 acres. The mine itself has been greatly developed, and a new reef 6 ft. in width, carrying rich gold, has been cut and driven on. The value of the ore is much increased, and this mine comes next to the Waihi as a gold-producer, the last month's return being worth £6,548, and the ore-value being £3 1s. per ton. It is, I understand, intended to increase the crushing-capacity of the mill, which is evidently necessary judging from the number of faces being worked and the amount of new blocks opened up. In the Te Ao-Marama section the work of driving the main crosscut is being rapidly pushed on. The prospects of this section are very good, as a good class of ore is being obtained, but until the crosscut through the hill is completed there is no means of conveying it to the battery. In the main section the low-level tunnel is making good headway, but until it is finished further sinking and driving cannot be undertaken, as there is at present no means of getting rid of the water. I shall not be surprised to see a much larger monthly gold return from this mine very shortly.

*Grace Darling Gold-mining Company.*—This company have gone to considerable expense on their mine, but so far with no satisfactory results. During the past year a new battery has been erected, but the ore treated was most disappointing, the returns being very small. Whether this was caused through wrong treatment, or the poor quality of the ore, remains yet to be definitely ascertained; in the meantime the company is being reconstructed.

*Alpha Gold-mining Company.*—Little work of importance has been done in this mine. The battery which was erected, after running a few weeks, was closed, the prospects not warranting further crushings of the ore at hand. A crosscut is now being put through the property, with a view to ascertain the number of reefs it contains, and to test the quality of the same.

The Jubilee Mine has been let on tribute for one year, which expires in August. The tributers are reported to have done fairly well, having opened up a good block of stone.

The Young New-Zealander and the Waitekauri King have been doing work of a prospecting nature with a reduced number of men.

The Ohinemuri Syndicate, after driving from their shaft for a considerable distance and intersecting a few small leaders only, failed to strike any portion of the reefs system from which such good gold was obtained in the surface-levels in times past. They have discontinued this, and resumed work again in the Elliott tunnel, so far, however, without success.

The Royal Standard Mine at Wharekiraupunga, since taken over by its new proprietor, has been under protection for the past twelve months.

The Waihi Mine, the largest in New Zealand, is still making rapid advance, and proving itself to be one of the great gold-producers of the world. Last year a large crosscut was started from the No. 2 shaft to the eastern boundary of the company's property. Although this crosscut has only been driven a few hundred feet, two large reefs carrying gold have been cut. How many more reefs may be met with before the drive reaches its proposed terminus it is difficult to say, as it appears this company cannot put in a drive in any direction without discovering a further supply of quartz. As the various lodes are sunk on they seem to increase in value, which, in addition to the new reefs discovered, should add very materially to the value of the output of the mine. The Waikino battery is being added to, and when the fifty head of stamps now being erected are in working-order the Victoria Reduction-works will be crushing with 150 head of stampers. Quite a thousand men are employed by this company.

The Union Waihi Gold-mining Company have during the past year acquired all the mining properties held by the Waihi-Silverton Gold-mining Company, together with its battery of forty stamp-heads, tramway, &c. The battery is now being thoroughly overhauled and repaired, preparatory to commencing crushing. The process to be adopted, I believe, is to be wet crushing. A large number of men are now engaged in development-work, so as to be in a position to keep the battery going continuously. It will afford me much pleasure to again see this mine figuring amongst the gold-producers of the Upper Thames portion of the peninsula.