

property is at present worked under option to Mr. J. Thompson, who is endeavouring to form a strong company, and raise capital to open up and develop the reefs which have already been discovered on the property, but through their position on the coast it will require a good deal of capital to open up and develop these reefs below sea-level. Four to six men were employed in the early part of the year, but during the last six months little or no work has been done on the property.

WHAREKIRAUPUNGA.

There has been very little work done in this locality during the year. Most of the claims taken up during the boom have been abandoned.

In the Royal Standard Mine a considerable amount of money was spent by the original company in connection with surface-works previous to thoroughly opening up the mine and proving the value of the ore-bodies, with the result that the whole of the property was put up for sale by public auction. The mine was purchased by Captain Hodge, of Coromandel, who has since done a limited amount of work in proving the value of the reefs, from which he had $14\frac{1}{2}$ tons of ore broken out and treated at the School of Mines, Thames, in the month of December, for a return of 18 oz. 10 dwt. of bullion, valued at £24 14s. 10d., which might be considered fairly satisfactory. At present there is only a caretaker in charge of the property, which is under protection, pending negotiations which are being carried on to raise capital to thoroughly open up the mine and prove its value.

PIAKO COUNTY.

Waiorongomai.

Empire and New Find Nos. 1 and 2.—This mine is owned by Mr. E. H. Hardy, who has worked it continuously during the year with ten men, and the results obtained have been exceedingly encouraging. The operations in the mine have been chiefly confined to working out a block of ground from the side of a winze that was sunk on the reef from the upper levels by the Waiorongomai Company. The reef is from 100 ft. to 140 ft. in thickness, but Mr. Hardy has been operating on a portion of it (which contains payable gold) varying from 4 ft. to 8 ft. wide, which produced 1,006 tons of quartz for a return of 738 oz. 16 dwt. of gold, valued at £1,974 4s. 2d.

Alexandra Mine.—This is one man's ground, and has been worked by the owner, Mr. Newsham. The leaders operated on are from 2 in. to 8 in. 2 tons of quartz was treated for 13 oz. 17 dwt. of gold, valued at £45 1s. 3d. The mine has been protected during the latter part of the year.

There has been very little work done in any other mines in this locality during the year.

KATIKATI DISTRICT.

Only a limited amount of prospecting has been done in this locality during the past year, and no discovery of importance reported.

TAURANGA.

Te Puke.

Fleming's Freehold.—On the eastern side of the hill a low level was put in to intersect the reef, and a winze sunk on the reef from the upper level to connect with the level mentioned, but, owing to the want of money to develop the mine, work has for some time past been stopped. This is to be regretted, as there are large reefs running through the property carrying gold, and, although a considerable portion of the reef that has been tried is low-grade ore, yet it is probable rich chutes might be found if money were forthcoming to develop them, especially as the country in the walls of the reef is, to all appearance, favourable for gold-bearing stone.

There has been only a little prospecting done on what is termed the Sisters, and Copeland's Freehold, but nothing of importance has been discovered.

WHANGAREI DISTRICT.

Puhipuhi.

Hampton Plains.—Operations in this mine have been carried out under the supervision of Mr. Holmans, who has had eight men employed in prospecting on the reefs known as the Victoria, Waipu, and Holmans. The Waipu low level is now in a distance of 621 ft., 250 ft. of which has penetrated through a chute of ore which contains a high percentage of silver, and there is about 275 ft. of backs available at this point for stoping. A level is now being proceeded with to cut the Victoria reef 200 ft. below the old silver-chute. Another level is also being driven to intersect a large reef known as "Blue reef," which shows a thickness of 9 ft. on the surface, and has given some satisfactory results. 2,000 ft. of driving, rising, and sinking have been done in prospecting the reef since the present company commenced operations.

GREAT BARRIER ISLAND.

Barrier Reefs Mine (Owners, Barrier Reef Gold- and Silver-mining Company).—This company's property consists of an area of about 2,200 acres, including 90 acres of freehold and 40 acres of Crown land, the balance, I am informed, being held under lease from the Kauri Timber Company, with an option to purchase. The operations up to the present are confined to the freehold and Crown section of the property. In the mine work has been continuously carried on during the year, the principal work being confined to opening up and developing the Lee reef, which is considered to be a highly payable ore-body, and has been opened up at three different levels, and improves in size in its course downwards. In the No. 1 level the reef has been driven on a distance of 150 ft., and varies from 8 in. to 2 ft. in thickness; but very little work has been done