

Four-in-hand with £4,235. This mine is opening up well, and is coming to the front. It is just paying its first dividend of 3d. per share. The return from the Kauri Freeholds Gold Estates Company totals up to £12,860, which is scarcely up to expectations.

The Ohinemuri County is credited with £510,931, and the Thames County with £56,304, out of the total of £641,150, which exceeds the value of gold produced in 1898 by £109,566.

The Coromandel County is entitled to credit of the Kauri Gold Estates Company, which makes the total £56,304.

Vast sums have been spent in machinery of all descriptions, and in construction of water-races. A great amount of development-work has been carried on during the year all over the field, and one or two mines have had small test crushings with their new batteries, notably the Broken Hills, at Tairua; the Grace Darling, at Waitekauri; and the Eclipse, at the Thames.

The Thames-Hauraki Goldfields (Limited), having undertaken the duty of erecting the pumping machinery for testing the deep levels at the Thames proper, have proceeded with that work, and are now down to their old workings, which had to be abandoned in consequence of the inflow of water. The old workings are being thoroughly repaired and cleaned out preparatory to work being resumed. It is to be hoped the next report will chronicle the success of the deep-levels scheme.

The vexed question of the drainage assessment made by the Thames Drainage Board, which was appealed from, was definitely settled on the 15th instant in the Warden's Court, all the companies but one coming to an arrangement satisfactory to themselves. The dissenting company's representatives were not in a position to accede to the proposals, and therefore had to accept the inevitable.

The only thing in the shape of a new rush was the pegging-out of claims on the Kapowai and Rangihau Blocks, near Mercury Bay, on Crown freehold, the subject of leases to the Kauri Timber Company. Good gold has been discovered in some of these claims near the surface, but time has not admitted of any extent of development taking place; therefore the permanency or otherwise of these mines is at present difficult to predict.

Short comments on the various mines in existence at present in the district are forwarded, as under:—

THAMES.

Tapu District.

Mahara Royal (Limited).—A large amount of work has been done in the Royal section of this mine. The drive on the reef at the low level has been considerably extended and the reef stoped out, but unfortunately the ore is of a low grade. Several leaders have been unearthed in the other sections of the mine, but after being tested were found to be small and of an unremunerative character, and driving was therefore discontinued. Gold of the value of £3,207 has been won during the year.

Bullion Gold-mining Company (late Sheridan).—The Sheridan Gold-mining Company having gone into liquidation, after having spent some £5,000 without any result, this mine was sold at public auction, and purchased by Mr. H. H. Adams, who formed the present company. After doing a considerable amount of prospecting without discovering any payable reefs the company ceased operations, and the mine was let on tribute to Charles Manuel and party. The tributers were not long at work before a "patch" was discovered, which has turned out very well indeed. The return for the year was 389 oz. 15 dwt., valued at £1,210 12s. 6d.

A few small claims have been working, but nothing was discovered.

Waikomo.

Monowai Gold-mines (Limited).—The treatment of the ore having proved unsuccessful, this mine was protected during the greater part of the year. 2 tons of ore was sent to Dapto, New South Wales, and there successfully treated, a yield of £10 per ton being obtained. Encouraged by this result the company have decided to resume operations. Improved concentrators (Union) will be erected and the ore reduced to concentrates, and shipped for final treatment to New South Wales. It is to be hoped that at last a successful means of treating the ore has been discovered, and that the company will be rewarded for its perseverance.

Broken Hill Gold-mining Company.—Very little work has been done in this mine. The ore is refractory and difficult to treat. Two sacks were sent to San Francisco, America, and treated at the Union Ironworks. The report supplied to the company states, "The ore has been treated by concentration and cyaniding the tailings, cyaniding the ore direct, and roasting and pan-amalgamation. Either of these treatments will treat the ore satisfactorily." The Rev. Joseph Campbell also reports that he treated small parcels of the ore successfully at the New Montezuma works, Te Aroha, by the hyperphoric process. The Smelting Company of Australia, at Dapto, New South Wales, also treated a small parcel, and reports that there should be no difficulty in treating the same in bulk. The company has not yet decided which process it will adopt. No doubt when the process has been decided upon work will be vigorously carried on. The ground contains large lodes which should prove payable with a suitable process.

PURU.

Puru Consolidated Gold-mining Company (Limited) is the only mine at work in this locality. Very little has been done by the company, and at present the mine is let on tribute. Although no ore has been crushed, a considerable quantity is to grass, and will soon be treated.