

and the face risen about 4 ft. New tramway-bridges have been erected, and 18 chains of new line constructed. The old amalgamating-tables have been removed and replaced by new ones 60 ft. in width, and consisting of thirty copper plates of the best quality procurable. A stone-breaker has also been added to the plant to facilitate the working of stony patches, which occur in different parts of claim. A trial crushing of 410 yards was completed on the old tables, which showed a return of 4s. 6d. per yard; but owing to the state of the tables a considerable quantity of the cement did not get fair treatment. Crushing operations will be commenced shortly, when it is intended to give the battery a three-months' run before making a final clean-up, and much better results are expected when the new tables and plates are in good working-order. New assay plant and balances have been procured, and will be in use as soon as a suitable building has been erected for their reception.

Virgin Flat Gold-mining Company.—Nine men are employed upon this claim, and sluicing operations have been carried on almost continuously for the past ten or eleven months. During that time about 2 acres of ground, averaging 16 ft. in depth, has been sluiced away. The washdirt is treated at the tables nearly three-quarters of a mile by tunnel from the face. The cement met with is broken up at the face, and gets ground to powder during its passage through the tunnel. The tables are the largest in the locality, measuring 150 ft. by 24 ft.

Neil and Party.—A new tunnel 1,600 ft. long has just been driven, the last section of which is now being boxed, and a new water-balance is being erected.

McCann and Party.—After two years' dead-work this party is sluicing. During the past year they have driven 600 ft. of tunnel through gravel, which has been boxed and blocked throughout. A shaft 40 ft. in length, to reach the washdirt, has been cut, and a new set of tables 60 ft. in width has also been constructed.

Senior and Party.—A new battery of ten heads of 600 lb. stampers, with self-feeding apparatus, has been constructed, together with an additional water-wheel to increase the driving-power.

Gould and Party.—This party has driven a branch tunnel 300 ft. in length to give them sufficient fall to work the southern end of their claim.

WAREATEA.

Fairdown Gold-dredging Company (Limited).—Pontoons had been constructed and floated in an excavation upon the claim, and a dredge purchased, when the directors heard that the adjoining claim had been "salted." It was then resolved to reinspect the claim, and the result was so unsatisfactory that the directors decided either to secure another claim or sell the dredge and pontoons.

Wareatea Gold-dredging Company (Limited).—After considerable prospecting had been done on this claim with highly satisfactory results a dredge and pontoons were procured, and dredging operations commenced in September. After working for some weeks with very poor results further prospecting was done. In places where previously from 10 dwt. to 15 dwt. per yard were obtained only a few colours were procured, the gold appearing to be different in sample from that obtained previously. Five bores and three shafts were put down with equally unfavourable results. Further operations were then abandoned, and the company is now in voluntary liquidation. There was some talk of instituting prosecutions against alleged "salters," but so far nothing has been done in this direction.

Island Creek Gold-dredging Company.—The career of this company corresponds very closely with that of the Wareatea Company. Highly favourable results of prospecting operations induced the directors to build a dredge and all other necessary plant to work their claim. At first the poor returns were attributed to defects in the plant; but when these defects were remedied, at considerable expense, it was found that the ground was still very poor and quite unpayable. The gold obtained by prospecting was different also from that won by the dredge. Many shareholders are in favour of prosecuting alleged "salters," but no steps have been taken in the matter.

WAIMANGAROA.

Britannia Gold-mining Company (Limited).—This company has had a fairly successful year. 696 tons of quartz has been crushed for 1,111 oz. of gold, worth from £3 16s. to £4 0s. 3d. per ounce. Prospecting is now being vigorously prosecuted, and indications are all in favour of the reef being met in the various drives at an early date. Timber is very difficult to get, and owing to the loose nature of the ground the large quantity required makes it a heavy item in the working-expenses. The construction of a further section of the new road near the claim would open up a good supply of mine-timber, which would be available for other claims besides the Britannia. The company uses a two-head Hendy battery with 850 lb. stamps, and finds it a highly suitable machine. The shareholders are now in the happy position of having received back the money invested by them, and a substantial profit in addition.

Stony Creek Gold-mining Company (Limited).—This company was incorporated in October last with a capital of £12,000 divided into 12,000 shares at £1 each, and all shares were promptly subscribed. The company was formed to work several reefs at Stony Creek prospected and driven on by Mr. William Silke and a small Westport syndicate. The company took over the old Republic Company's battery and aerial tramway, and at considerable expense put them in good working-order. At the present time 150 tons of quartz has been broken out ready for crushing, and there is a good show of stone considered payable in sight. The stone already taken out prospects $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to the ton, and there is apparently a promising future in store for the company.

Old Diggings.—During the past year A. G. Hill and party have taken up a special claim in this locality, and pushed on energetically with preliminary works. Water-race, tail-race, &c., have been completed, and sluicing operations are carried on whenever the water in the Buller River