

The Parapara Hydraulic Sluicing and Mining Company (Limited) has opened up new ground during the year, and, according to information courteously supplied by the secretary, secured 783 oz. 6 dwt. 14 gr. for the year's work.

The Slate River Sluicing Company (Limited) have done much work during the year, and have won 295 oz. 17 dwt. 6 gr. of gold. Owing to the non-completion of the dam as originally designed, the company's works have at times been hampered by the slackness of the water-supply. The gold is undoubtedly there, and no doubt this enterprising company will take vigorous steps to extract it to the best advantage. An unfortunate lawsuit with their contractor for the erection of the dam has doubtless had the effect of checking development, and it is to be regretted that the matter is not yet settled.

Golden Blocks (Taitapu), Limited, is a dividend-paying quartz-mine, which has been very successfully worked by its very competent manager, Mr. Frank H. Johnson, from whom I learn that £2,105 3s. 6d. has been paid in dividends during the year. The quantity of quartz crushed was 2,402 tons, yielding 2,119 oz. of gold.

The Taitapu Gold Estates (Limited) has had a successful year, 3,442 tons of quartz crushed from the Golden Ridge and Anthill Mines having yielded 2,223 oz.; and, in addition to this, the estate has been recently systematically prospected for coal by an expert, who has discovered valuable seams of a superior quality and conveniently situated for working and shipping in deep water. A report has been sent to the Home directors, and it is confidently expected that instructions to commence work on the seams at once will be shortly received. This may possibly lead also to the opening-up of some very fine forest lands which heretofore have been little explored, owing to the wetness of the country and the denseness of the undergrowth, combined with the distance from settlement and the wretched condition of the road.

TAKAKA.

During the year only four mining privileges were applied for. Three were granted and one withdrawn.

The Takaka Sluicing Company, at the Pupu, is keeping up its reputation as a dividend-paying claim, having declared dividends amounting to £1,368 during the year. During the same period calls were made amounting to £404 13s. 6d. The claim produced 984 oz. of gold during the year. It is worked by three shifts of five men each. The men are paid 8s. per shift.

Malone and Anderson have given over their shares in the Extended Claim at the Pupu to their third mate, Roach, who is fossicking in the shallow ground.

At the Anatoki, Jackson's Extended Claim has been taken over by Gibbs and James, who are bringing up the tail-race to prove the ground; as yet they have got nothing to pay them for their trouble.

At Sheepy Flat, Morrison and others are employed by the shareholders in bringing up a tail-race from the Anatoki River, but from the rough nature of the ground and the enormous stones they have had to contend with, the work is progressing very slowly. The prospects found when the claim was taken up make the shareholders sanguine that they have a good venture.

MOTUEKA, INCLUDING MOUNT ARTHUR TABLELAND.

The Courthouse at Motueka, being on the eastern side of the river, is outside the mining district; also I may mention that, the Postmaster being the Clerk of the Warden's Court, the Warden's office is at the post-office instead of at the Courthouse, which is some distance away. If it were at the Courthouse, as it no doubt should be, it would take the Postmaster too much away from his postal duties. The present arrangement works very well as far as the public are concerned, but causes the carrying backwards and forwards of statutes, books, and papers on Court days. As far as I have information, the only part of this district where mining is being carried on is the Tableland, where only about seven miners are working for a bare living. There is a prospect, I believe, of some enterprising Aucklanders working ground on a larger scale than has heretofore been attempted, with water brought in from Lake Peel. There are seven water-races, five tail-races, and three dams in existence in the locality.

Nothing whatever appears to have been done by the holder of the prospecting license for asbestos.

NELSON, INCLUDING WANGAPEKA, SHERRY, TADMOR, AND THE BATON.

Here again the Warden's Court held at Nelson is outside the mining district, and is distant some twenty-five miles from the nearest part of it, entailing much loss of time and money when applications are objected to and witnesses have to be brought long distances, as has recently been the case. The only nearer Courthouse is at Brightwater, which would save twelve miles, but I should lose the services of Mr. C. H. Webb-Bowen as Warden's clerk, services I value highly, as he has had a long experience of Warden's Court work on the West Coast, and is a very capable officer. Moreover, he is always willing to assist and give the benefit of his experience to the less experienced clerks in the district.

Wangapeka.—After much delay the Wangapeka Company's dredge was completed and taken across the Wangapeka River to its claim situated above Blue Rocks. After working for a short time it was found that the ground was deeper than was anticipated, the elevator was too short to keep the tailings clear of the dredge, and the gold-saving appliances appear to have been defective. The dredge has now been dismantled with the intention of lengthening the ladder and fixing up an up-to-date elevator and gold-saving tables at a considerable cost. The directors appear satisfied with the prospects obtained during the short time the dredge was at work. A seam of brown coal has been discovered in close proximity to the dredge claim, which will, it is hoped, materially contribute to the economical working of the dredge.