

The Hikutaia Syndicate after struggling for years have at last had to surrender the bulk of their ground, retaining an area less than 100 acres.

At Maratoto the old company not having met with anything to recoup their outlay have sold their property. Of the new owner's intentions nothing is at present known.

There are one or two other holdings here, but there is nothing to report of interest in connection with them.

WAI TEKAURI.

The Waitekauri Gold-mining Company have had another very unsuccessful year searching for gold. Between thirty and forty men have been employed on their various properties. The battery has been at a standstill, but a considerable amount of development mining has been carried on at various sections of the ground, which no doubt will shortly recoup them for the outlay they have been put to. A great deal of gold has been obtained from both the Golden Cross and Waitekauri sections of this property, and there is no reason why some more should not yet be secured.

The Waitekauri Extended section of this company's property has yielded nothing this year, and another battery there is standing idle.

The Jubilee Company's claims are protected at the present time. I understand an effort is being made to raise further capital for further development-works, but it has not yet been secured.

Want of capital is the greatest barrier to the successful development of some at least of our claims; such a vast capital being required to make one of them into a mine that capitalists are chary to risk their money in perhaps something which, though gold-bearing, may not turn out very remunerative.

Besides these larger areas there are several smaller extended claims in existence, but as one individual man owns each of these, very little is likely to be heard of them, unless by some fortuitous chance one or other of them turns out very rich.

The Ohinemuri Syndicate at Owaharoa, after struggling on for some years, have at last given up mining their ground, and sold the machinery they had erected there.

Two coal leases have been taken up under the Coal-mines Act in the vicinity of Karangahake. Report says, coal of a good quality has been discovered on the ground taken up.

WAIHI.

The great Waihi Mine has produced over fifty thousand pounds' worth of gold every month during the past year, and the company has displayed its usual energy in its mining operations. A new pumping plant has been imported to supplement those already in use. It is said that when this plant is erected and in working-order, the company will have pumping machinery at work valued at £130,000. The new pump is for erection at the No. 5 shaft, indeed its erection is nearly completed. It is a very massive piece of machinery, and going at a nominal speed, will raise 1,500 gallons of water per minute to a height of 1,550 ft. The other two pumps raise 1,000 gallons per minute and 800 gallons per minute respectively to 1,000 ft. The three pumps running together at a nominal speed will be able to raise 3,300 gallons of water per minute to a height of from 1,000 ft. to over 1,500 ft. If taxed, the new pump will be able to raise 2,000 gallons of water per minute. The company has employed twelve hundred men in and about its mining operations, and there is every prospect of this number being much increased in the near future, as, with the new pumping machinery in full work, the deeper levels will be thoroughly prospected and developed, when, should they prove anything like as rich as the upper ones, a great many more men will be required to carry the work on in them.

The Grand Junction has purchased the battery erected at Opitonui by the Kauri Freeholds Gold Estates, which is being taken down and removed to Waihi for erection there; I trust, therefore, when reporting next year, I may be able to report this mine as another gold-producer. This company up to the present has received nothing for the £150,000 spent upon its property. The great quantity of water met with has been one of the main obstacles to their success. There is from all accounts, very little doubt as to a rich gold deposit being in this property, which boring tests have more recently confirmed.

Altogether between 4,000 and 5,000 acres at Waihi are held under mining-licenses as claims, but so far only one of the mines within this area is a gold-producer. The others are in some cases working away trying to find the precious metal, while others are frequently changing hands, each holder in turn trying hard to raise capital, failure to do which necessitates a surrender. This takes place periodically, but so far none of the holders have succeeded in securing the wished-for means for developing any of them. It is anticipated that in the event of the Grand Junction being successful in securing fair returns, a fair prospect for obtaining money from England will be secured, hence the desire to keep possession of these claims.

The Waihi Extended, the Waihi Consols, the Waihi Consolidated, and the Waihi South have all spent considerable sums upon the ground held by them in trying to find what reefs they possess; but so far with poor results, in fact with no results whatever. Recently, however, one or two of the companies have been endeavouring to prospect by boring, but so far nothing in the nature of reefs has been met with, and the drilling company have met with many difficulties from the nature of the ground that they did not anticipate having to contend with; these circumstances have tended to defer the acquirement of that knowledge which it was hoped the boring would have rapidly disclosed. The Waihi Extended however have been working with twelve men during the past year, and it is reported have recently met with a good-looking lode.

Of the other claims there is nothing to report, except that on the Waihi Beach work has been carried on with a reduced number of men.

The Ohinemuri River Claims Syndicate after erecting a plant for treating old tailings deposited in the bed of the river, discovered that many things required altering, while other articles had to be substituted. These conditions have caused many difficulties and delays, and very materially increased