

to extend it further on the line of reef to undercut a winze from No. 4. Connection has been successfully completed, and stoping has now commenced, but up to time of writing, battery-returns have not come to hand. The working is securely timbered and well ventilated.

Big River.—As stated in my report of last year this company had completed a further sinking of 100 ft. in the main shaft, making a total depth of 1,090 ft. After considerable driving, crosscutting and rising, they were fortunate in striking a block of high average stone, from which a crushing of 340 tons near the close of the year yielded 453 oz. The prospects of this stone continue favourable, and it is hoped that the company will reap a rich harvest for the pluck and energy displayed in carrying out such an extended period of development.

Last Chance.—Morris and Fleming, in continuing to mine the small leaders on this claim, are stimulated by the periodical returns from the battery, which seem to have a natural tendency to improve as they go along. Great care is taken to secure the ground.

Golden Lead.—This company continue with unabated energy to follow the leaders on this property, even though the prospects so far obtained have been very discouraging. Two men are employed.

Jones Creek, Ross.—Messrs. Aitken and Sutherland are carrying out a system of trenching and crosscutting on a small leader, located near the upper reaches of the Jones Creek. In the low level they have followed a well-defined leader 3 in. thick, carrying fair gold, for 16 ft. The lead is increased in a very promising slate country, and, providing it proves to increase in dimensions and value, a new phase of mining may probably await the Ross district.

Mount Paparoa (Mr. Alexander Campbell, mine-manager; Mr. George Cray, secretary, Greymouth).—Operations at the inspection in May consisted in stoping out the block of stone north and south of winze sunk from No. 2 level. All ground is securely timbered and well ventilated; the winze mentioned acting as the upcast. Twenty-one men were employed. The mine was closed down towards the end of the year.

Garden Gully (Mr. Hooper, mine-manager; Mr. Parkinson, secretary, Greymouth).—Six men have been employed driving along the lode (north) on a body of quartz having an average width of from 9 ft. to 12 ft. The present contract is for 100 ft. Gold can be seen in the stone at times. All works are securely timbered and are ventilated by a fan; the motive-power being water. [The crosscut to the reef is 563 ft.

GENERAL REMARKS.

It is pleasing that in point of productiveness and values, the mining industry has fully maintained its standard, notwithstanding that the Merrijigs, Big River, and Paparoa districts have been practically non-productive. While we cannot omit to remark that the return, £5,250, from the new Inkerman Mines is indicative of future prosperity, it is further notable that the standard now attained by persistent and systematic development of the ore-bodies at depth, not only insures profitable investment and permanent employment, but is conducive also to establish settlement and to be a stimulating factor in the providing of more comfortable homes. The prospector also is encouraged to make further research in the development of fresh fields. This latter remark is worthy of attention, as scope is amply provided for the profitable discovery of increased wealth.

Respecting the recent discovery of the Ulster lode in the Waitahu district, we have to congratulate the prospectors and investors on this important find, and it is hoped the enterprise will fully maintain the anticipations projected.

There were no fatal accidents during the year.

HYDRAULIC AND ALLUVIAL MINING.

MAHAKIPAWA.

King Solomon Syndicate.—After considerable expenditure in water-race construction and pumping-installation to unwater and clear out the old King Solomon shaft-working, the company had to abandon further operations, and sink an intermediate shaft, which is used for winding and travelling; the water being raised by an 8 in. pump at the Golden Gate, and by a 9 in. pump at King Solomon shaft. Surface preparatory work is very slow, and underground operations are not likely to commence for some time.

In the Mahakipawa Valley, mining is confined to thirteen resident miners, who make varied earnings, as their prosperity largely depends on the rainfall. Cody and Jackson recently picked up two nice nuggets, valued at about £10, which are considered to be the forerunners of increased prosperity in the valley. Quite a rush has set in for quartz-areas, and a number have been pegged off.

Wakamarina and Deep Creek.—The river and creek being exceptionally low, owing to the very dry season, advantage was taken by the miners to turn the streams at several points, and they have been successful in clearing up the bottom with very encouraging results. Charles Dimante is making further effort to reconstruct the company for a last chance, failing this, mining in the Wakamarina will be a matter of history.

Ericon Hydraulic Sluicing Company.—This property may be regarded as practically a thing of the past as far as mining is concerned. The original owners (who have cleared small holdings) make a comfortable living between fossicking and farming.

Top Valley.—Since work has been suspended at the quartz-mines, the miners have taken advantage to rake the beds of the low streams, and, on two occasions, with splendid results.

TAKAKA.

Takaka Hydraulic Sluicing Company (Charles Campbell, manager).—With the systematic developments judiciously carried out under the practical supervision of Mr. Campbell, the consistent returns obtained from this property have proved the venture to be monetarily successful. To facilitate future operations in the construction of fluming and maintenance of water-races, the erection of a sawmill is nearing completion. Pipe-line installations and other works are kept in good order. There are twelve men employed on the property.