

Lucky Shot Gold-mining Co., Ltd., Thames.—A total distance of 135 ft. has been driven south-west on the main reef; the quartz broken out showed gold freely. At a point 60 ft. from the break a dropper going into the foot-wall was met with; width, 6 in. A distance of 65 ft. has been driven on this dropper; gold has been freely seen in the quartz, and about 50 lb. of picked stone got. The drive west on the main reef, which averages 6 ft. in width, has been extended for a distance of 68 ft., and the quartz broken out showed gold for the first 40 ft. driven. In the foot-wall of this reef two parallel lodes were met with and driven on for 60 ft., from which occasional parcels of picked stone were obtained. Two winzes have also been sunk—No. 1 to a depth of 50 ft., with the object of testing the main reef at this depth; No. 2 for 40 ft., on the junction of the main reef and the foot-wall dropper. Gold has been freely seen in the ore broken out for the whole of this distance. A trial crushing of 14 tons yielded gold valued at £54 19s. 10d.

Golden Age Gold-mining Co., Ltd., Thames.—A total distance of 180 ft. was driven on the Golden Age reef; a winze was sunk for 40 ft. and a rise put up 15 ft. The results met with, however, proved disappointing.

The New Sylvia Gold-mining Co., Ltd., Thames.—Work carried out in this mine during the year consisted of continuing the cleaning-out and retimbering of the Missouri level, a total distance of 1,400 ft. A rise is also being repaired in order to connect with the surface for ventilation purposes.

Monowai Mine, Thames.—This mine has been worked by a syndicate, which has cleaned and retimbered the low level with the object of sampling the Monowai reef; which is of large dimensions and said to contain high-grade refractory ore. I understand that a parcel of this ore has been sent to Germany for treatment, and if the results turn out as contemplated funds will be available to thoroughly develop this lode.

Zeelan Consolidated Gold-mining Co., Ltd., Thames.—This mine has been held under protection during the year. The Dominion Securities, Ltd., of Wellington, have, I am informed, bought this property, and expect to be in a position to resume operations shortly.

Hauraki Mines Consolidated, Ltd., Coromandel (H. F. Shepherd, Manager).—The overhauling and additions to machinery for unwatering the mine were completed early in March, and a 13 in. plunger-pump, assisted by two bailing-tanks, each holding 2 tons of water, commenced operations; but owing to the exceptionally wet weather and mishaps to the machinery, due to the chains crystallizing with the constant strain and vibrations, and other serious delays, the unwatering of the mine was not completed until the 3rd August. In the shaft and chambers all the wrought iron and pump valves had to be renewed, the cisterns cleaned and rebolted, a 4 in. pipe-line for compressed air for the sinking-pump and rock-drills and water-pipe line and electric light installed. On the 18th October a start was made to sink the shaft below the 400 ft. level; a depth of 100 ft. has been sunk and the chamber is being cut out. No. 4 level has been cleaned up, tram-lines and air-pipes laid into the different faces, and a start made to drive the seaward face. This was met with at 45 ft., and on breaking down the reef a small parcel of specimen stone was selected from the hanging-wall portion, and gold freely seen well distributed through the main portion of the reef. The face is now 60 ft. seaward of the junction, and gold continues to be seen in the main portion at each breaking-down. This drive is being extended for the purpose of reaching the junction of the Green Harp reef, a noted gold-producer in the upper level. A crosscut to the Hauraki north section is now in progress to test the Welcome Find and other reefs at this depth. The battery is being overhauled ready for crushing the ore won from the seaward face at the 400 ft. level.

Mount Welcome Gold-mining Co., Ltd., Tokotea (J. Vickerstaff, Manager).—The principal work carried out in this mine has been the extension of the drive on the Puketutu reef at the low level to get under the point where a winze was sunk from the upper level with encouraging results, but could not be continued on account of the large quantity of water to be contended with.

Father's Hope Claim, Tokotea.—Four men have been employed fossicking about the old levels. The results met with proved disappointing.

Iris Claim, Matawai.—During the year 34½ tons treated produced gold valued at £70 7s.

Handsworth Mine, Kuaotunu (S. James, Owner).—Work is being continued in this mine prospecting the old levels, but without locating anything of a payable character.

Peter Maxwell Claim, Te Aroha.—The low-level crosscut to intersect the Pick and Dish reef was continued and had reached a point estimated to be within 15 ft. of this lode when the funds became exhausted and the company went into voluntary liquidation.

Empire Reefs Gold-mining Co., Ltd., Whangamata.—Work in progress driving low level for the purpose of intersecting the Luck at Last reef. An air-compressing plant driven by an oil-engine has been installed, but as only two men are employed slow progress is being made.

Muir's Gold Reefs, Ltd., Te Puke.—The delivery of the new pumping plant was completed in April, and since then work has been confined to the erection and operation of the pump and making the necessary alterations to the pumping-compartment in which the pump operates. The pump was assembled and a successful trial run took place on the 19th May. Difficulties arose in connection with the supply of power by the Tauranga Power Board, and it was not until November that these difficulties were overcome and a supply of electric-power made available. Pumping was resumed on the 7th November, and the water was lowered to 370 ft. below the surface on the 31st December. Considerable loss of time was occasioned by bearing troubles in the pump and the pump-motor. These difficulties have been overcome. A serious breakdown in the windings of the pump-motor occurred on the 23rd December. Repairs were effected, and the pump is now operating efficiently, the output of water exceeding 1,000 gallons per minute.

COPPER-MINING.

No work has been done by the Ruahine Copper Syndicate during the year.

QUICKSILVER MINES.

The Great British Cinnabar-mines, Puhipuhi.—400 tons of ore treated produced 14 cwt. of mercury, valued at £462.

Mount Mitchell Mercury-mine, Puhipuhi.—Two men have been employed prospecting, but nothing of importance has been discovered.

OIL-WELLS.

Blenheim Oil-well Reclamation Co., Ltd.—Satisfactory arrangements having been made with the Mines Department for the purchase of this well and plant, this company was formed with the object of endeavouring to reclaim the Blenheim well. As the plant at the well had not been in use for several years, extensive repairs had to be effected to the derrick and machinery, and 2,000 ft. of wire rope obtained from Australia. Operations were commenced on the 23rd June. The wire cable was rigged and a string of tools attached necessary for the survey of the well. Tools were made for fishing the obstruction: this was hooked several times, but it was found impossible to pull it. On the last pull it gave way and dropped where it was desired to seal off. The sealing-off process was completed with iron-sand and a large hard wooden plug. The 7 in. casing, with lead packing, was then lowered into the well; it proved too heavy for the clamps to hold as they were then made, and this length of casing slipped down to the seal-off. A further length was lowered to join up, but this did not prove a success. The object of putting down this casing was to shut off the water; all but 80 ft. was withdrawn. Mr. Bender, well-manager, who had tried every known method to pull this casing, intimated that he was making a special tool of his own design which he hoped would be successful; this also proved a failure, and work was suspended pending the decision of the shareholders at their annual meeting. Since this company commenced operations in May last the natural flow of oil amounted to 11,000 gallons.