

amalgamation a new company, composed of the shareholders of the former two, was formed under the title of the Specimen Hill Extended. Operations have been carried on on this company's mine during the greater portion of the past ten years, and, until the last few months, without success. Success will now probably reward the shareholders for their perseverance. Sufficient work has been done upon the reef to prove the existence of such a body of stone as to warrant the company in the erection of crushing machinery, which has now been decided upon. In all probability the battery will be erected, and pour out its golden harvest before the close of the year.

The Imperial Company's mine is situated south of the Just-in-Time, at Boatman's Creek. Many years ago the ground was held by the Rose of Lancaster Company, and afterwards by the Alhambra Company. The latter company did a little prospecting, and found some very poor stone. The present company on obtaining the ground commenced sinking a shaft, and after sinking about 35 feet struck similiar stone to that discovered by the Alhambra Company. After sinking a few more feet the character of the stone changed and opened out into a good reef carrying splendid gold. Altogether 130 feet have been sunk. The company is about to erect poppet heads over the shaft and connect the mine by tramway with the Fiery Cross and Just-in-Time battery situated but a very short distance away. Everything will be in readiness for a crushing in about four months.

There is a proposal now under consideration for sinking a main shaft by the Imperial, Just-in-Time, and South Hopeful Companies, which, if carried out, would doubtless enable these companies to work their lower levels to a far greater advantage. Past experience in mining in this district shows the advisability of carrying out main works of this description conjointly by the companies interested, thus avoiding the unnecessary expenditure of money upon separate undertakings.

The Just-in-Time have had successful crushings of stone taken out of ground below the level of Boatman's Creek, proving, in this as in some other mines in the district, that the deeper the levels the better and more permanent are the prospects and yield.

The Fiery Cross Company have now completed the sinking of the main shaft, and are now driving for the reef. The company possess substantial winding machinery, which is in good working order.

The Eureka Company, whose lease is situated on the north-east boundary of the Welcome Company have, after many delays occasioned by objections of Fiery Cross and Welcome Companies, commenced operations, and are driving an incline tunnel of about 2,400 feet in length for the purpose of intersecting the easterly underlie of the Welcome reef, supposed to exist on their south boundary at a depth of 540 feet below the present lowest level of the Welcome Company. From surveys that have been made it is contemplated that a depth of reef will be obtained of 270 feet; this depth, allowing for the underlie of the reef, will give a length of 308 feet on the slope, or what is technically termed 308 feet of "backs." The company purpose erecting winding machinery to be worked by water-power, and plans for this are now being prepared. Possibly rock-boring machinery will also be employed. There are many who, for several reasons, are of opinion that the company will be unable to carry the undertaking to a successful issue; I trust, however, they may be mistaken, as the work must involve the expenditure of a large sum of money. The shareholders seem prepared for this, and are buoyed up with the hope of ultimately securing a rich prize.

In the Murray Creek District the Golden Fleece Company have, during the year, struck a splendid gold-bearing reef at a depth of 600 feet from the top of their shaft. This company was one of the earliest and best dividend-paying claims in the district, and will probably return to its former position in a short time.

The Keep-it-Dark Company have lately erected winding machinery and sunk a shaft which has now attained a depth considerably below the level of the Inangahua River. During the last year the company, after performing a vast amount of work, drove to and struck the reef, which has proved to be of large dimensions and of very good quality. The company have had crushings from the reef recently struck, with such good results that they have been enabled to pay off I believe the greater portion, if not the whole, of their liabilities, and paid a dividend. A continuance of dividends from this mine may be expected for a considerable time to come.

The Wealth of Nations Company (now being re-formed) at present hold several leases covering a large area of land, and have now applied for a special claim to include the whole of the above leases. Prospecting has been actively carried on for a long time past, and recently what may ultimately prove to be a most important discovery was made in that portion of the company's ground formerly held by the Golden Bell, by the unearthing of a reef 4 feet thick, which promises to be payable.

The Result Company and Energetic Company are vigorously prospecting their mines.

The Golden Treasure, which I mentioned in a previous report, have been obtaining good stone from their lower works, late crushings proving remunerative. They employ twenty-one head of stampers. This claim will rank among the dividend-paying.

The Caledonian Company, situate at Larry's Creek, which many years ago had such good crushings, have for some time past and are now driving for the reef from the bottom of their shaft, and occasionally cut very rich leaders of quartz.

In the Rainy Creek District the lease and battery which fell into the hands of Mr. H. Graham upon the old Rainy Creek Company being wound up, have been purchased from him by a newly-formed company called the Rainy Creek Extended Company at a cost of about £4,000. The mine is now being opened up and placed in thorough working order, and crushing commenced. Very large bodies of stone are known to exist in the mine. In the same locality is the mine of the Inkerman Company, who have called for tenders for the supply of a battery of thirty head of stamps. If not too high, a tender will be accepted, and a few months may see the erection of the machinery.

Many years ago the cement leads in Lankey's Creek were worked, but were on the discovery of the quartz reefs abandoned. Attention has once more been directed to them, and a company (the Lankey's Creek Company) has been recently formed for the purpose of working them. The mining claims in the vicinity, together with all the available water, have been purchased, and a special claim of some 40 acres granted. A 10-head stamper battery, to be worked by steam, has been purchased at the Thames, and will shortly be conveyed to and erected on the machine site. It is proposed to construct from the centre of the claim to the battery a main tail-race, which will be properly boxed and fitted with false bottoms or blocks. In some places the ground will be worked as an ordinary sluicing claim.