

table-land, and I was forced to refer the prospectors to these as the probable source from which the ore was set free. However, on more carefully examining the larger samples which I brought to Wellington I find one sample veined with cherty quartz, clearly indicating that the source of the ore is not the volcanic rocks, but the chert or quartz rock which has been already described as present in the Young Colonial, Caledonia, and Matilda Claims, on the east side of the table-land. These same rocks appear under the volcanic sheet at the steep pinch in the road by which the upper table-land is reached from the south, and these rocks strike along the east side of the upper table-land, and are present on the very ground over which the cinnabar has been obtained. I have now no doubt that it is from these rocks that the ore has been liberated.

"This is a much more hopeful and satisfactory conclusion than referring the source of the cinnabar to the volcanic rocks, since in the latter case there was but little chance of a connected body of ore of any bulk, while it is in every way probable that a lode exists somewhere in the quartz rock to which it is now referred.

"*Conclusion.*—The examination made and above described leads unavoidably to the conclusion that the Puhipuhi Silverfield forms part of a mineralised region stretching along the east coast of the Auckland peninsula, both to the north and south of the limits of this field. The quartz reefs are well defined, and prove themselves that they live through a vertical depth of 500ft. to 700ft., or from the level of the Puhipuhi table-land to the valley of the Waikari at the Luminary Claim, and the lowest levels at which reefs have been found on the opposite west side of the table-land; and there can be no doubt that they continue to a great depth below the drainage-levels of the country. Almost all the reefs contain silver-ore, more or less, and this also is a hopeful sign for the field and its future prospects. Unfortunately, the average percentage of ore is perhaps too little to enable it to be treated profitably, with the appliances at present on the field. In this latter respect, however, there is room for improvement; and in respect of a richer stone being present at deeper levels than yet attained to there is also hope. But, unfortunately, many disappointments have damped the ardour of those engaged in developing the resources of the field—nor would I wish it understood that there are not good reasons for the present depressed state of mining at Puhipuhi; still less would I be warranted in saying anything that might lead to further hope and further disappointment—but, for all that, there is the possibility of a great future for the Puhipuhi and adjoining district as a field for mining enterprise."

COROMANDEL DISTRICT.

Mining in the immediate vicinity of Coromandel has not been carried on so successfully as in the previous year; but, taking the returns from the whole of the district, including Kuaotunu, there has been more gold obtained than for many years previous. The returns show that the mining claims comprise an area of 569 acres, on which an average of 240 men were employed on wages, or working their own claims, and 36 men were working on tribute, making a total of 276 men on the field; and that during the year 12,595 tons of quartz were crushed, which yielded 12,047oz. gold; also, 435 tons of tailings were treated, with a result of about 145oz. gold. This makes the total yield of gold for the past year 12,192oz., being an average of about 44oz. 3dwt. of gold for every man employed on the field.

Tokatea Range.—There have been fewer men employed on this range than in former years; and the reason given for this is that the principal ground, comprising 90 acres, was held, until recently, by three companies—namely, the Harbour View, Royal Oak, and Tokatea. None of these companies employed any men on wages during last year, and only eighteen men were employed on tribute. Recently, the licensed holdings of the Royal Oak and Harbour View have been forfeited. The former was at once taken up by Mr. Joseph Witheford, of Auckland, and he has let portion of the ground on tribute, at 5 per cent. of the gross yield of gold, for a period of three years, and another portion, at 10 per cent., for a considerable period. The former tributers crushed about 2cwt. of stone a few days prior to my visit, which yielded 188oz. melted gold. Mr. Witheford deserves credit for throwing the ground open on a low tribute for a lengthened period, as the miners state it gives them a chance of doing dead-work and to properly open up the mine, instead of having to pay from 20 to 25 per cent. of the gross yield of gold, they will now have an opportunity of earning fair wages. When a company's tribute was exacted, nothing but extremely rich stone was crushed: auriferous quartz, giving 2oz. of gold per ton, was not considered sufficiently rich to send it to the crushing-battery. During the last year there were six men and twenty-two tributers employed in all the claims on this range, the six men getting about 23 tons of quartz, which yielded about 611oz. of gold, being an average of 26oz. 11dwt. per ton; and twenty-two tributers got 13 tons of quartz, which yielded 394oz. of gold, being an average of about 30oz. 2dwt. per ton. Taking the total number of men employed on the range—namely, twenty-eight—and the total quantity of gold produced for last year—namely, 1,005oz.—it gives an average of about 35oz. 18dwt. of gold for every man employed, or a value of about £99 per man, which is a considerably less average than for the previous year. The richest find last year was obtained from the Try Again Claim, when two men got 1 ton 14cwt. 20lb. of stone, which yielded 463oz. of gold.

There is a very large lode passing through this range, termed by the miners a "buck" reef; portions of this lode have been crushed from time to time by different parties, which yielded from 3dwt. to 15dwt. per ton. A very rich shot of gold was found in this lode in the Tokatea Company's ground, on the side of the range facing Kennedy Bay; but very little prospecting has been done on it on the Coromandel side of the range. There is no place in the Coromandel district where prospecting could be carried on with a better chance of success than on this lode. No doubt the lode contains very low-grade ore, but there is every prospect of rich shots of gold being found in some portions of it. The whole of the Tokatea Range is full of small stringers of quartz interlaced amongst the tufaceous sandstone, and almost every small vein branching off this large lode carries