

*Maratoto District.*

*Hikutaiia Gold Syndicate Mine.*—This mine was formerly held by local owners, who, after expending a large amount in prospecting and development work, ascertained that the ore was of low grade, and required to be dealt with on a large scale, for which additional capital was required. Mr. J. E. Banks, general manager, describes the mine and workings as follows:—

The Hikutaiia Gold Syndicate (Limited) was incorporated in London on the 15th April, 1896. The group of mining properties owned by the syndicate comprises the Maratoto United Special Claim and several adjacent holdings, containing a total area of about 350 acres. The property is situated at the head of the Pakirarahi Creek, Hikutaiia, in the Ohinemuri district of the Thames Goldfield, and occupies the northern slopes of the range forming the watershed between the Waitekauri, Komata, and Maratoto districts. The principal mine-workings are situated on the Maratoto United Special Claim, in which a large lode has been driven upon at six levels a total distance of 2,500 ft. The average width of the lode is 12 ft. A cross-cut tunnel is now being driven, which will intersect the lode 150 ft. below the present workings; the average total backs obtainable from this adit being 275 ft. A considerable amount of prospecting work has also been done on the other sections of the property, sufficient to prove the persistence of the lode through these areas, which, however, will be worked more advantageously through the adit now being driven. The character of the ore is generally low grade, and large reduction works will be necessary to insure success. The company possesses ample water rights.

*Walker's Maratoto* (Area, 80 acres 2 rood 2 perches).—This mine comprises the original Prospectors' Claim, from which very rich silver-ore was obtained in the early days of Maratoto. There was not much work carried on by the present owner other than opening some of the old workings. In the beginning of 1897 the mine was placed under option to the Mines Corporation Company, and since then work has been vigorously carried on, and in the low levels a continuation of the rich ore worked near the surface was traced. Another reef has also been discovered, the ore being worth about £4 per ton. These results are so far satisfactory that a company with £20,000 available working capital is prepared to take over the mine. It is proposed to undertake extensive works in putting up milling and ore-treating machinery on a scale equivalent to the value of the mine. Arrangements are also made for developing the reefs at a great depth by driving a long low-level tunnel, which will pass through and also develop the adjoining special claim, named the Long Drive. Sixteen men were employed.

Prospecting works have also been carried on in the Waitekauri, Magazine, Express, Irving, Ophir, Lord Salisbury, Retreat, and other claims.

*Komata District.*

*Komata Queen Mine* (Area, 120 acres).—Komata Queen (Limited), an English company, is the owner. A large gold-bearing reef was discovered on the surface, and 326 ft. of driving done to prove it. A considerable amount of cross-cutting was done, and over 1,000 ft. of deep trenching. Twenty-five men were employed.

*Komata Amalgamated* (Area, 344 acres, comprising the following claims: Komata Royal, Komata King, Komata Proprietary, each 100 acres, and Komata Chief, 44 acres).—This property was acquired under option, with the exception of the Komata Proprietary section, which has been purchased by the London and New Zealand Exploration Company (Limited). Thirteen prospecting tunnels were put in, and surface trenching done. No defined reef has yet been cut. Twelve men were employed.

*Komata Reefs Mine* (Area, 79 acres).—A large amount of work has been carried on by the Komata Reefs Gold-mining Company (Limited), the owners of this mine, during the year. The three reefs known as Argall's lode, Lavington's lode, and the Komata reef have been well opened up, and the mine will shortly be in first-class working-order. Tramways are being constructed to convey the quartz from the mine to the new battery, a distance of about 120 chains. A staff of fifty men was employed during the year. The following description of the mine-workings, tramways, and plant has been furnished by the general manager, Mr. W. H. Argall:—

*Argall's Lode:* The drive on foot-wall portion of the lode north from the main cross-cut has been extended a distance of 57 ft. A long piece of bottom had to be taken up a length of 218 ft., average depth 3 ft., caused through driving south from No. 2 cross-cut. At a point from main cross-cut 200 ft. north No. 1 rise was started, and rose 52 ft. A further distance northward on this level of 60 ft. No. 2 rise was commenced, and rose 111 ft. Three cross-cut drives, averaging 11 ft., at intervals of 50 ft., were put through to the hanging-wall to show the thickness of the ore-body at this level. Also a drive on the hanging-wall portion, 39 ft. long, to prove its value. I am pleased to say that all work done on this portion of the mine is of a most promising and payable nature, besides which, immediately at the point of No. 2 rise, a branch leader was discovered running into the foot-wall. This leader is now known as Hartridge's leader, and has been driven on 101 ft., and proved highly payable throughout. An intermediate level, commencing from surface, and about 250 ft. north from main cross-cut, has been driven a distance of 50 ft., for the purpose of intersecting No. 2 rise for ventilation. A drive northward from the rise on the foot-wall portion of the lode has been made 32 ft. The ore-body at this point is 12 ft. thick, showing payable ore throughout. Argall's lode south from the main cross-cut has been extended a distance of 120 ft.; total length, 145 ft. The ore-body is very large, averaging fully 12 ft. of clean solid stone. The first 70 ft. from the flat sheet the ore is of a very payable character, but from this point south the ore is low grade, which shows that we must expect parts of this large lode to be not so remunerative; but when further developed on its course there is every reason to expect that we shall discover other rich runs in this direction.

*Lavington's Lode:* This remarkably large body of stone, fully 30 ft. in thickness, has been driven upon the hanging-wall portion a distance of 80 ft. north. Although the rock is of a splendid