

3,000 gallons of water from a depth of 2,000 ft. This should enable the lower levels to be reached within a reasonable time.

Kuaotunu is agitating for a low-level scheme, which, probably, may prove successful in connection with the Mariposa Mine, which is in the centre of other gold-producing mines.

The *Mining World*, of May speaking of New Zealand mining, says, "It is satisfactory to be able to state that a larger amount of gold has been obtained from the New Zealand mines in the past quarter than in any corresponding period; and that, although dealings in New Zealand shares are still very small compared with those which take place in more favoured groups, the recent movements of prices have been upward on balance, the advances having considerably exceeded the decline in market valuations. To some extent the improvement has been due to the best of all influences, the purchase of shares by local investors, who have excellent means of judging the position and prospects of individual properties. The general trade of the colony is expanding. The Auckland Mining Exhibition proved a great success. During 1898 there was an increase of 28,530 oz., valued at £100,487, over the preceding year's production; and it is worth while noting that from the 1st April, 1857, the date at which gold shipments from the colony commenced, the total amount of the precious metal entered for export up to the close of last year reached 13,845,725 oz., valued at £54,453,325. It is as well that the importance of this fact should be borne in mind by investors, who are apt to forget the important position which New Zealand has occupied, and is, we believe, destined to occupy, in the future among the great producing countries of the world."

During the present year several new claims have been taken in various portions of the district, chiefly consisting of claims taken up during the late boom, which were either surrendered or forfeited.

In the Coromandel district several extended quartz claims have been granted. This is a step in the right direction, as persons with limited means will have a better chance to thoroughly prospect their respective holdings; but, as under the labour regulations two men will fully man an extended claim, it will mean years before sufficient work to ascertain what is in the ground is done. I have no doubt this marking-out of fresh claims is in measure caused by the better feeling at present existing at Home with respect to New Zealand, as indicated in the extract from the *Mining World*.

The success which dredging has met with in the South has stimulated persons here to apply and take up portions of the foreshore for dredging purposes. Two claims now exist, and I trust, when reporting next year, I shall be able to give some information as to the success of the scheme.

A drainage scheme on a large scale is mooted in connection with Waihi, the idea being to drain out to sea a distance of four miles. This, it is contended, would drain all the mines to the 400 ft. level. The proposal, however, at present has not, so far as I know, advanced beyond the stage of being talked about.

The mining in this peninsula is little more than in its infancy, and the immense possibilities of our mining system unknown. Its permanency has, however, been placed beyond a doubt, and, looking at past results, the future can be faced without fear; indeed, the prospects at the present time are such that several years ago were little thought or dreamed of. There is still a large area of country, a great deal of which was pegged out during the boom, but which in the majority of cases never had a pick put into it, some of which, it is only fair to presume, will in the no distant future be thoroughly prospected, when some lucky prospectors will make discoveries which will add to gold returns of the district. It is no doubt the unknown nature of our reef system that has originated the idea of a drainage-area for Waihi, which, once established, would enable all claimholders to reach the 400 ft. level without having to incur expensive pumping machinery to unwater their shafts with.

Some three or four coal leases have been granted in the vicinity of Waihi. It is to be hoped coal in workable quantities may be discovered, as very shortly it will be very much required in that locality for mining purposes, owing to the disappearance of the timber from the land within reasonable reach of the mines.

The gold return for Coromandel County for 1898 was £53,829, being a decrease on the year 1897 of £19,508. This, no doubt, can be accounted for from the patchy nature of the run of gold there. In the current year probably this deficiency will be made up. Thames County, £47,580, an increase on 1897 of £15,402; Ohinemuri, £473,397, an increase on 1897 of £173,290.

THAMES COUNTY.

Tapu.

Mahara Royal (Mahara Royal Company, Limited).—This company, incorporated in England, has met with considerable success during the past year, winning 1,556 oz. of gold, valued at £4,236. New levels have been opened up in three sections. In the Royal section the main reef is being driven on in a southerly direction, and the ore is improving in value as it advances. The reef is about 8 ft. wide, shows colour of gold, and generally its appearance is most promising. In the Fluke section the new low level has to be driven 40 ft. further before it will intersect the main reef. Nice-looking veins of quartz were met with in the drive. The extension of the low level in the Shannon section is being pushed on, but the reef is not yet to hand. Ten stamps and twelve berdans have been added to the battery, at a cost of £1,700.

Sheridan (Sheridan Gold-mining Company, No Liability).—This company, formed in Napier, has not had any success. Some £5,000 was spent in prospecting, but the results were most discouraging. The mine and battery are to be sold at public auction at an early date.

There are no other mines of any importance at work in this district.