

enterprise. The gold-saving tables erected here continue to give satisfaction in saving very fine gold, and are a source of attraction to mining-men from other countries who are connected with works of a similar nature. A mining engineer from Canada, who has recently been on a tour of inspection through Australia and New Zealand, has pronounced these tables as superior to anything of the sort he has yet seen in any part of the world.

The following is the rainfall at Round Hill from the 1st April, 1899, to the 31st March, 1900: April, 9·04 in.; May, 2·20 in.; June, 2·38 in.; July, 6·15 in., 0·80 in.; August, 2·44 in.; September, 0·95 in., 3·80 in.; October, 5·54 in.; November, 3·50 in.; December, 6·90 in., 0·25 in.; January, 4·10 in.; February, 6·16 in.; March, 6·35 in.: total for twelve months, 60·56 in.

Smith Gold-mining Company (Limited), Round Hill (Secretary, L. W. Petchell, Riverton).—This is a locally formed company, the capital being £1,500 in £1 shares, and the claim is situated immediately below the forks of the Ourawera Stream. Operations were commenced in October, 1898, to clear a pipe-line and form a dam, the latter having a capacity of 130,000 cubic feet. This is necessary owing to the somewhat limited water-supply at times; and by the storage effected the claim may be worked eight hours daily out of the twenty-four (or one shift per day) in ordinary dry weather. The dam is situated at an elevation of 180 ft. above the claim, and the plant comprises 55 chains of 13 in. diameter main pipe-line, and several chains of 9 in. and 7 in. service-pipes to nozzle and elevator. All the plant was designed by and erected under the superintendence of Mr. George Lee, manager of the Round Hill Company's works, and includes one of Mr. Lee's patent elevators. The saving-tables are practically identical in principle with those in use by the Round Hill Company, and I understand the entire plant gives every satisfaction. From information supplied to me this claim appears to be paying handsomely. Since my visit the company were unfortunate in sustaining serious loss by two floods, but since these occurred the elevator has been removed further from the creek and the plant re-erected in a better position. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the gold won has, I understand, more than cleared all costs, and the claim is in a fair way for earning good dividends. Five men are employed.

The *Ourawera Gold-mining Company* have laid a second pipe-line, and have been running two elevators for several months when sufficient water has been available. They are now, I understand, about to make important additions to their water-service, and concentrate their operations on one elevator, which should give better results than two elevators working with an insufficient water-supply. The ground being worked is increasing in thickness of overburden, hence results per cubic yard have somewhat decreased; still, the earnings of the claim are said to be very satisfactory on the whole. Twelve men employed.

Oraki Gold-mining Company (Limited).—This company is composed of local shareholders, who have been somewhat unfortunate owing to a small available water-supply and inadequate storage-dam, also to the ground not turning out so well as was expected. The claim has therefore been let on tribute. Recent advices state that the tributers are only making bare wages. The claim, situated behind the Township of Colac, is worked by hydraulic sluicing and elevating.

There are a few small parties working in the locality, also several Chinese diggers, whose number appears to be gradually diminishing.

Considerable interest is being taken locally in the question of dredging, a company having been floated to work an area at Lake George. The pontoons are already built, and machinery is being erected. The Ourawera Creek Dredging Company is also on the market, the intention being to work the flats at and above the mouth of the Whakapatu Sludge-channel. If these ventures are successful, there is very little doubt of the extension of the dredging interest in the locality, as several claims are taken up, and the success or otherwise of the first dredge will be an important factor in determining the further development of this class of mining in the neighbourhood.

Orepuki.

Undaunted Gold-mining Company.—This company's works are the most extensive on the field, and comprise—(a) A claim adjoining that of Forbes Brothers, which is worked from an adit; and (b) two small sluicing claims near the bush. In the former the ground is wet and fairly heavy, necessitating good timbering. This latter has been well attended to by Mr. Corbett, who has charge of the works, and is a man with considerable experience of underground working. Ventilation, and a means of outlet in case of emergency, are provided for by means of a small shaft 56 ft. deep. This shaft is also used for lowering timber. Instead of trucking the washdirt outside, it is emptied into a sluice-box near the shaft. This sluice-box is laid along the adit and continued outside. Ripples and matting are provided for catching the gold. Head-water is conveyed down the shaft in pipes. The payable wash averages 2 ft. thick. The sluicing claims worked by the company have been acquired from the Chinamen, who were supplied with water from McLean's race. This has also been purchased by the company, and is about thirteen miles in length, taking its water from Deep Creek and the Waimeamea Creek. One of these claims is said to be rich, and good returns are looked for; the other one may not yield much more gold than will pay expenses. Eighteen men employed by the company.

The claims of Forbes Brothers, Wilson and party, and some others are worked partly by sluicing and partly by driving, while Pearson's, Hobb's, and McLoughlin and Manning's claims are all underground work; most of the other claims in the district continuing to be worked by ground-sluicing.

Owing to the limited amount of clean head-water available on the one hand, and the thickness of clay overlying the wash on the other hand, there is a growing tendency to adopt underground mining, bringing out as little barren stuff as possible.

Unfortunately, the men of the district appear to know very little, as a rule, as to how timber should be set to secure ground. In several instances I found it necessary to bring men out of their drives to point out the defective timbering from the mouths of the drives inwards. It would