

intersected and driven on 70 ft. north and 50 ft. south of the crosscut. The quartz broken out of this reef is considered to be of a payable character. The following is a summary of the work done: Driving, 762 ft.; sinking, 152 ft.; rising, 59 ft.; stoping, 386 fathoms. 2,151 tons of ore was treated during the year for a value of £4,669 3s. 9d., and an average of fifty men were employed.

Coronation Claim.—In the early part of the year a testing plant consisting of five stamps and two berdans, driven by a small portable steam-engine, was erected at the mine; and as there was a large body of ore carrying gold it was considered the best way to prove its value was by treating a quantity instead of depending on assays before erecting an up-to-date crushing plant. After putting 103 tons through the mill for 23 oz. 3 dwt., valued at £57 17s. 6d., the company decided to stop crushing, and directed their attention to prospecting with a view to finding higher-grade ore. An average of two men were employed.

Golden Belt.—The crushing plant in course of erection was increased from thirty to forty stamps, but the work in the mine was not far enough advanced to produce sufficient ore to keep the mill constantly running. The mill and the connections with the mine have not been quite completed. The low level has been driven a total distance of 1,600 ft. to a point under where a winze had been sunk on the reef from the smithy level to a depth of 62 ft. To connect with the bottom of this winze a rise was put up a distance of 92 ft.; this has been a tedious and expensive, although necessary, undertaking in connection with the development of the mine. It has given excellent ventilation and good facilities for working the reefs from the lower level to the surface. The reef (so far as it has been prospected by the present company) is said to contain very high values in places and, taken as a whole, will give payable results. It is expected crushing will now be commenced at an early date. Eight men were employed.

Champion Claim.—This mine has been energetically prospected during the year and a large body of quartz opened out on the surface at different places. These openings appear to indicate a continuous line of reef. Good prospects of gold can be obtained by crushing the stone in a small mortar and panning it off. The prospects met with were such that the shareholders contemplate erecting a crushing plant. Two men have been employed during the year.

KERIKERI.

Kerikeri Mine.—The work proceeded with during the year was the extension of what was formerly known as the low level on the leader, which opens out in places to 2 ft. in width and is composed of a network of stringers of quartz. I am informed that at one place for about 80 ft. along the drive and for 80 ft. over the drive the ore, so far as it has been tested, carries 2 oz. of gold to the ton. The company's attention is also being directed to driving a low level on the south side of the property to intersect the reef. This will give 120 ft. of backs to the bottom of the level before mentioned; and should the reef at this level prove as good as at the levels above an eight-stamp battery and other gold-saving appliances will be erected a few hundred feet below the lowest level. An average of five men employed.

HIKUTAIA DISTRICT.

Maratoto Mine.—The work in this mine was of a prospecting character, and no quartz was treated at the company's mill during the year. Four men were employed.

Silver King Mine.—Two men were employed in driving and prospecting on this claim, but no crushings were reported.

OMAHU DISTRICT.

Omahu Mines (Sheet-anchor).—In the latter part of the year the company's attention was directed to the erection of a ten-stamp battery and gold-saving appliances with a view to crushing the quartz in sight and opening up the mine on a more extensive scale than hitherto. No quartz was treated during the year. Four men employed.

PURIRI DISTRICT.

Puriri Gold Estates.—Little or nothing has been done on this property during the year.

Miners' Right Claim.—This claim is worked by John McInnis and party, who are engaged in working on small leaders near the surface, but have not been very successful during the year. Two men have been employed.

THAMES DISTRICT.

Waiotahi Mine.—This claim is situated at Waiotahi Creek, and is bounded on the north and north-east by the Kuranui-Caledonian and Moanataiari claims, and comprises an area of 22 acres 3 roods 20 perches. This was a dividend-paying mine up to the end of 1903. The small leaders operated on being exhausted, the mine was considered worked out; but the directors decided to test the lower levels more fully before giving up the mine, and operations were at once directed to opening out on the back of No. 4 chamber of the shaft. After driving a distance of 180 ft., the Waiotahi main reef was met with; when 80 ft. had been driven on the reef rich gold was discovered. The prospects of the mine still look most encouraging, and a large sum of money is expected to be paid in dividends during the year 1906. The following is a summary of the works carried out: The main shaft has been sunk 108 ft., and the Nos. 5 and 6 levels opened up. The Nos. 4 and 5 levels have been connected by two winzes, and the ground is now well opened up for stoping. The drives going east at Nos. 4, 5, and 6 levels are being continued, and are opening up a large block of practically new country. A crosscut is also being driven from the No. 4 level to the old Mary Ann shaft. This shaft has been retimbered throughout and put in order; a new boiler has been built in and poppet-heads erected, and as soon as a connection is made this shaft will be used for winding purposes. At No. 6 level a connection has been made with the