

Operations at the Chelmsford Mine have not resulted in such success as the proprietary was led to expect when they decided to reopen the mine. The company's affairs have been put into liquidation.

Very little work was done at the Waimangu Mine during the year. The reef is considered highly payable, and I understand it will be opened up and a battery erected at an early date.

At the Golden Belt Mine, Neavesville, development-work has been continued, but was not sufficiently advanced to maintain a sufficient supply of quartz to keep the battery-works going during the year. The battery is equipped with forty heads of stamps, concentrators, and cyanide plant. The property is generally considered to be one which gives promise of success.

Prospecting-work has been carried out at the Champion Claim and the Kerikeri Mine prior to incurring the expense of erecting plants for the treatment of the ore. In both instances prospects of a satisfactory character are reported to have been obtained, and the erection of batterie is proposed.

The construction of a battery plant (ten heads) has occupied the attention of the proprietors of the Omaha (Sheet Anchor) Mines.

The discovery of some rich quartz at the Waiotahi Mine, Thames, near the end of the year 1904, has caused increased interest being taken in and attention given to the possibilities of the Thames again coming to the front as a gold-producing centre. The ore treated from the Waiotahi Mine during the year was 4,986 tons of general quartz and 2 tons 14 cwt. 1 qr. 12 lb. of picked stone, which yielded a value of £73,884 9s. 7d., equal to an average of upwards of £14 per ton over the entire production. The sum of £51,300 was paid in dividends. This mine has been a dividend-paying property for many years, even when only working on narrow leaders or stringers of quartz, and now that good bodies of ore—so far proved to be of a very remunerative character—have been met with, there appears every possibility of the mine being a profitable undertaking for some years to come. The shaft has been sunk deeper and lower levels are being opened up, new mining plant has been erected, the old battery of twenty stamps overhauled and repaired, a new battery of forty stamps purchased, and a plant for the treatment of tailings installed in connection with the mill. Employment was given during the year to fifty-two persons on the average.

Encouraged by the success which has attended the operations at the Waiotahi Mine, the owners of neighbouring properties have given some attention to prospecting their ground more energetically. A new lode has been discovered at the Moanataiari Mine, where there is still a large area of undeveloped ground. The ore won in the ordinary working of the mine during the year had an average value of £2 13s. 10d. per ton.

By a mutual arrangement, an underground connection has been made between the Waiotahi and the Kuranui-Caledonian Mines for the purposes of drainage and ventilation. The Cambria Reef at the latter mine is proving to be of considerable width, and somewhat extensive works of a prospecting character have been put in hand which give the management hopes of a successful issue.

The Old Alburnia Mine, which has employed forty persons, yielded gold to a value of £1,828 15s. 8d., or at the rate of £4 4s. 1d. per ton of quartz milled. A considerable amount of dead-work was done during the year.

Prospecting, development-work, and overhauls of plant have characterized the operations at the Kuranui Mine and also the Victoria Mine during the year. At the former the work has all been in the direction of future efficiency, but at the latter some quartz was also raised and treated, 153 tons yielding gold to the value of £691 4s. 9d., or equivalent to £4 10s. 4-3d. per ton.

The Thames Gold-mining Company (a new proprietary) have taken over the Fame and Fortune and the Nonpareil Mines, and propose to develop the properties from the Moanataiari main tunnel. During the year gold to the value of £292 10s. 2d. was obtained from 175 tons of ore (average value £1 13s. 5-1d. per ton) from the Fame and Fortune Mine, and £560 7s. 6d. from 60 tons (average value £9 6s. 9-1d. per ton) obtained from leaders in the Nonpareil Mine.

Operations in the New Saxon Mine have been confined to the working of ground previously opened out, and the question of prospecting at deeper levels is a matter for the future. The gold won (valued at £845 from 213 tons of ore) shows an average value of nearly £5 per ton of stone.

The New May Queen Mine, which was closed down for some considerable time, has been reopened and put into repair; a connection by borehole has also been made with the Queen of Beauty Mine for the purposes of drainage. The works mentioned took some time to carry out, and therefore the actual mining of quartz was only conducted during a small part of the year. From 214½ tons of ore gold to the value of £901 4s. 9d. was obtained, or equivalent to £4 3s. 9-5d. per ton. These workings are said to be the deepest from which payable results have so far been obtained at the Thames, and if values like the foregoing can be maintained this part of the field will doubtless receive increased attention from investors.

The New May Queen Extended and New Una Mines are both worked from the main tunnel of the former, and employ six men each. At both mines a similar state of things exists, and the quartz—although of good average value where the reef is reasonably large—being got in narrow veins, necessitates a considerable amount of dead-work for its extraction, consequently mining-costs are naturally heavy. The average values of the ore won at each mine were £2 12s. 1-2d. and £2 5s. 10-4d. per ton respectively.

At Tararu Creek Mine some development-work has been in progress during the year, and further developments are under consideration. The ore treated during the year only gave an average value of £1 2s. 3-3d. per ton.

Development-work and improvements to and rearrangement of plant have been made at the Eclipse Mine. The ore treated was 1,388 tons, yielding a gold-value of £3,193 5s. 4d., or an average of £2 6s. 0-1d. per ton.

A few small mines, each employing a few men only, have been worked during the year in the locality of Thames with varying degrees of success.