

At Waiomo, with the exception of the work done on the Monowai Mine, very little mining has been going on. About thirty men have been employed on the Monowai Mine, over which an option to purchase is held by the Ferguson's Smelting Company. The ores of the district generally, and of this claim in particular, are refractory, and up to the present time no satisfactory method of treatment has been available in the district. It is expected, however, that the large smelting-works erected by the Ferguson's Smelting Company near the beach at Waiomo, and now practically completed, will be able effectively to deal with it.

The completion of the smelting-works referred to has been looked forward to with interest for some time all over the mining district, for it is hoped that by its means the large deposits of refractory ores existing from Te Aroha to Waiomo may be made to yield the gold known to be contained in them—a result which cannot be obtained by any process at present in use in the district.

At the Thames mining operations have, on the whole, not been very energetically prosecuted. This portion of the district has been in work for the last forty years, with the result that all the upper portions of the mining properties have been worked out, and the only hope there is for the continued existence of mining lies in the development of these old claims at a greater depth. The necessity for deeper workings, particularly in that portion lying between the Moanataiari slide and the sea, has been foreseen for years past, and from time to time suggestions have been made as to combined efforts by the different claimholders to bring this about. But it is only within the last year or two that these suggestions have begun to assume tangible shape. The deep shaft sunk on the Queen of Beauty claim by the May Queen Company with the assistance of a subsidy from the Government has now reached a depth of 1,000 ft., the lowest portion being sunk through country very favourable for the existence of auriferous lodes. The sinking of this shaft and the favourable nature of the country reached by it has greatly strengthened the belief in the recurrence of gold-deposits at depths greater than has yet been attempted at the Thames. Several schemes of co-operation by companies concerned have been propounded, whereby a general plan of working, by means of a main crosscut from this shaft, might be carried out so as to enable the various claimowners to prospect their respective claims by branch tunnels driven from the main tunnel. There is no doubt that a concerted plan of operations, in which each company would bear its proportion of the cost, is the most obvious and reasonable method of taking advantage of the means afforded by the Queen of Beauty shaft for testing their claims at a greater depth. Unfortunately for the prosperity of the district, conflicting interests have led to differences of opinion as to the direction in which the crosscut should be driven. In consequence, nothing is done, and the whole district is languishing. To a mere onlooker it seems difficult to understand why it should be impossible for the parties interested to come to an agreement. Among claimowners, earnest in their desire to take advantage of the opportunity presented of resuscitating their properties, one would think it ought not to be difficult by mutual and reasonable concessions to agree upon a general plan of co-operation, advantageous to themselves and beneficial to the district at large. In the meantime, with one or two exceptions, comparatively little mining is being carried on upon the area affected.

Among those working, the Waiotahi Mine has employed the largest number of men, and yielded the largest return of gold—viz., 5,421 oz., valued at £14,716. The May Queen Company has been carrying on vigorous work, and an interesting feature of their operations is that this mine is being worked and gold obtained at the lowest depth yet reached on the Thames, the No. 6 level being 722 ft. below the surface, while in the Queen of Beauty section a crosscut has been driven 800 ft. below the surface to connect with the level worked in the May Queen section.

Work has been continuously carried on by the Kurunui-Caledonian Company on their claim. The Kuranui Mine and the Victoria Mine have kept on operations during the year, but very little work has been done on the New Moanataiari or the Saxon Mines. They are waiting for development from the deep-level scheme of operations.

The Old Alburnia Company, whose mine is situated at the head of the Moanataiari Creek, have been steadily carrying on their operations in extending the Moanataiari tunnel in a direction to bring it under the old workings of the claim. This tunnel has now been driven a distance of 8,000 ft., and from the end a rise has been put up a distance of nearly 500 ft. to connect with the old workings near the surface. The company has been engaged in this work for the past six or seven years, and have pursued their object with great perseverance. The tunnel having been driven the required distance, and the rise to the surface almost completed, it is expected that the company will be shortly engaged in opening up their property by crosscuts to be driven from the rise now in progress.

Two mines in the Thames district have come prominently into notice during the last year—viz., the Waitangi, at Shellback Creek, and the Sylvia, at Tararu. In both these claims developmental works have been in constant progress, and the prospects of both properties are stated to be of a promising nature. The ore in both mines is somewhat refractory, and, though the difficulty of its treatment is by no means insuperable, the most economical and efficient method of treatment has yet to be determined. Encouraged by the success of the Sylvia claim, several claims have recently been taken up in Tararu, and work commenced upon them; but, so far, operations have not gone beyond the prospecting stage.

The mining industry at Coromandel is passing through a period of depression, but there are indications of a returning interest in this portion of the goldfield. Several mines have been in operation for years, and during the past twelve months work has still been continued, though without any adequate return in gold produced. Revived interest has been manifested in the Hauraki and the Hauraki Freeholds claims, and work is being more energetically carried on with every hope of its ultimate success.

The Kapanga Mine—the oldest in the peninsula, and long worked by an English proprietary—has been acquired by a new company, who intend to unwater the shaft—now down a depth of 1,000 ft.—and to recommence operations from the bottom, with the object of working the run of gold stated to