

this level blocks of ore were stoped out, in all 7,000 tons, which was treated for a return value of £8,693. At the battery level another block is being opened up on the same reef. This level was driven through the No. 1 reef for a distance of about 700 ft., and several small ore-bodies cut through which will be driven on to test their values. On the Nos. 3 and 4 reefs prospecting has been done. It is the company's intention to vigorously prospect the Blucher reef in the coming year. Sixty men were employed.

Golden Hills Mine (J. Rickard, manager).—No. 1 reef was intersected in Nos. 2 and 3 levels and the reef driven on for some length. The reef at this stage was found to be from 5 ft. to 6 ft. wide, and the ore-values were very encouraging. A rise was then made to connect the two levels. There is a large block of ore between the Nos. 2 and 3 levels which looks very promising. From the south-west side of the property a level is being driven with the double object of prospecting the claim and reaching a very fine kauri bush, from which timber will be got for mining purposes. Eighteen men were employed.

Tairua Triumph (B. Barker, manager).—Three reefs have been located on the claim, and a great amount of driving was done on them. The reefs vary in width from 12 in. to 12 ft., and samples taken from them gave satisfactory results.

Uzaila (J. Patterson, manager).—Several reef-outcrops have been located and worked. A low level has been driven on the most promising reef to test its values. Five men were employed.

Tairua Dawn (D. Ryan, manager).—The company commenced operations at their mine in August last, and started a low level which, it is expected, will cut a large reef. At the close of the year, 220 ft. had been driven. Six men were employed.

Tairua Leeds (Mr. Cartwright, manager).—The company has only recently acquired this claim, on which several large reefs—locally known as Big reefs—are outcropping. An adit level is being driven to intersect one of the large lodes, and good progress is being made.

Ready Bullion (Quartz Claim).—No. 1 level has been driven a distance of 250 ft., when a lode was met and a winze sunk to a depth of 20 ft. No. 2 level has been driven 100 ft., and when the lode is cut there will be about 100 ft. of backs between Nos. 1 and 2 levels. Four men were employed.

Ready Bullion (Shuicing Claim).—The ground is covered with large boulders of quartz and quartz gravels, derived, no doubt, from the crumbling of the caps of the large reefs outcropping on the mountain-side higher up. Great difficulty has been experienced in the way of getting an adequate supply of water in the summer months. This drawback is due to the claim being situated at the head of a small stream, and also to the small catchment-area. Consequently this has much retarded mining operations. Two men were employed.

Phoenix Mine.—A shaft was sunk to a depth of 80 ft., when by means of a short crosscut the main reef was cut into and driven on its course for 100 ft. in each direction. Later a drive was started with the object of cutting the reef to prove its width: at the time of my visit nearly 100 ft. of reef-formation, with its ribs of country rock and quartz alternating, was showing. A small gas-producer plant has been erected to work the mine-pump and the winding machinery. The mine was in good order at the time of my visit. Eleven men were employed.

Luck at Last Claim.—Very little work has been done on the claim during the past twelve months. I understand that the owner is endeavouring to raise sufficient capital to test the property thoroughly. Two men were employed.

Dreadnought Claim.—The mine is situated about a mile north-west of the Phoenix property. As the claim has only recently been worked, it is still in the initial stage of development. An adit level has just been started. Two men were employed.

MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

Copper.

Ferguson's Syndicate (Thomas Herbert, manager).—I visited Knight's section of the syndicate's property, where a drive had been driven for a distance of 360 ft., resulting in nothing of a satisfactory nature being discovered, and at a point about 25 ft. from the end of the drive a winze was sunk to a depth of 112 ft., from which point a drive has been commenced. The drive and winze are in good order, both being well timbered, but the ventilation was poor. Instructions have been issued that no more work is to be done in the winze until the ventilation is improved. Another section has also been prospected with indifferent results. Four men were employed.

Hare-Ratjen Mine.—No work has been done on the claim for some time past. Mr. Hare stated that the property was under offer to a company in Australia.

Northern Copper Company's Mine.—A shaft has been sunk to test the lodes known to exist in the claim. A dispute arose between the company and the Natives with regard to a right of way, with the result that the company, failing at a settlement, was forced to cease operations, as it was rendered impossible to bring machinery and mining requisites on to the ground.

Antimony.

Lanigan's Mines (Limited), (L. H. Gordon, manager).—Mining has been done in adit levels driven on a large well-defined lode about 5 ft. wide and carrying fair values in antimony-ores. From time to time parcels of ore have been shipped to Australia for treatment. The results being satisfactory, the company was induced to erect a small smelting plant, which has, unfortunately, proved an utter failure. The company is prospecting energetically several sections of the property, and deserves to meet with success.

I have, &c.,

BOYD BENNIE.

Inspector of Mines.