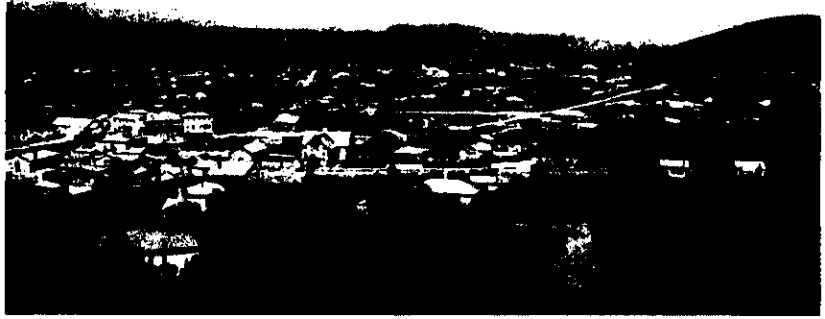


WAIHI.

Waihi! To the Maori, the word Waihi means fishing water, but to the pakeha of the Dominion it signifies the town possessing one of the foremost mines of the world, the town of erratic weather, for strong winds blow pretty constantly from all parts of the compass, and, thirdly, a town which has attained great notoriety for the varied kinds of excitement it affords. Why the latter should predominate so largely in the formation of history is, perhaps, a little difficult to determine, but the answer solving the problem why Waihi is distinct from other towns of the colony in this respect may be traceable to the very heavy percentage of young and middle-aged people who form the community, and the almost complete absence of those who have borne the heat and burden of the day,



WAIHI, LOOKING TOWARDS HOSPITAL.

town naturally became very much scattered, and the result has been the construction of miles of roads and streets that should never have existed. The borough, therefore, has had an immense tax placed upon its financial resources, and the reduction of any part of its gold-duty would certainly prove disastrous just now when so much still requires to be done. The council, however, has unquestionably done remarkably well, and during its very short existence has brought in a water supply for domestic and fire purposes at a cost of about £21,000, erected municipal gas works at a cost of about £2000, so that it will be seen our city fathers believe in keeping the birthright of the people intact as far as possible. Moreover, the council has also grassed, and laid out with trees, etc., a fine recreation ground, which embraces a bowling green, of which visiting bowlers speak in the highest praise; in fact, it is regarded as one of the best greens in the province, thus removing for ever the idea that "grass will not grow in Waihi." The council has now under consideration the erection of swimming baths, and everything possible is being



EXTENSION WORKS, WAIHI GRAND JUNCTION BATTERY.

and are now resting from, and enjoying the fruits of, their labours elsewhere. Yes! Waihi is undoubtedly the home of the worker, and within the boundaries of the borough are to be found some of the finest specimens of young manhood as are to be found in any part of the King's dominions. The population of Waihi numbers now close on 7000, all of whom are entirely dependent, directly or indirectly, upon the mining operations conducted.

Municipally the affairs are under the control of the Waihi Borough Council, which was formed several years ago, owing to the persistent agitation that Waihi, although producing the greater portion of the Ohinemuri County's revenue, was not receiving its fair share of roads, paths, etc. The new council, with an herculean task before it, set about immediately in the effort to make the place more habitable, and it has done wonders in this direction. Owing to so many acre residence sites having been granted by the Warden's Court, before the actual importance of Waihi had disclosed itself, the residential part of the



MAIN STREET, WAIHI, LOOKING NORTH.

done for the comfort and convenience of the inhabitants. The ratable value of the Waihi borough is estimated, approximately, at about £33,000, whilst the revenue from gold duty, etc., is estimated at about £16,000 per annum.

Commercially, the town will hold its own with any town of similar size in the Dominion, and when the distance from the main producing centres is considered, together with heavy freights, etc., it is marvellous that goods can be purchased at such cheap rates as prevail; indeed, goods are sold, in some instances, at a lower rate than those which obtains at Paeroa, the neighbouring port for the Upper Thames district. The main street, which comprises the principal places of business, has now been designated Seddon-street, in memory of the late Premier, and possesses some handsome shops, in the most of which wares and goods are invitingly and temptingly arrayed. The fronts now all comprise plate-glass windows, and, generally speaking, the shops are up to date.



WAIHI RAILWAY STATION.