

But as mining progressed the ground became deeper and more difficult to work, requiring a greater amount of capital which not only absorbed the spare cash of the individual miner, but in many instances compelled him to rely on the storekeeper for assistance. Accordingly the money which was previously available for prospecting is now directed into other channels connected with mining.

Under the existing state of affairs it becomes the duty of the Government, in order to develop our mineral wealth, to assist the miners in further prospecting and exploring the country. To do this systematically and economically all works appertaining to prospecting should be placed under the direction of the local authority or miner's association in the district where prospecting is being carried on. It is therefore proposed to ask the House for a small vote for this purpose.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE ON WORKS.

To summarise the expenditure on works constructed and authorities on works in progress since the votes were placed under the Minister in charge of the department, it has been as follows: Roads and tracks on goldfields, £220,184; roads and tracks to open up mineral lands, £6,852; water-races, £45,508; drainage-channels, £21,401; prospecting works, £48,481; wharves, £436; diamond and other drills, £4,448; towards the treatment of ores, £1,342; and schools of mines, inclusive of amounts paid to the University of Otago, £12,986: making a total of £361,640, out of which £257,749 has been paid by Government; and the liabilities amounted on the 31st March last to £11,312, the balance being paid by local bodies and private companies. A detailed statement of these works will be found in the tables attached to the report of the Inspecting Engineer.

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

Since the establishment of schools of mines throughout the colony the miners have far more knowledge about the mineral ores that are met with and the percentage of metals they contain. This will tend to cause mining to be conducted on a more intelligent basis, and cannot fail to produce a beneficial effect on the industry. The inauguration of this system of technical education is due to Professor Black, who, by his energy and perseverance, caused the miners in every district to take an interest in the subject, and by practical demonstration he showed them that, in order to follow their avocation with success, it was necessary to be able to distinguish the mineral ores met with, and also their value. It must, however, be admitted that any system of peripatetic teaching can only have the effect of temporarily arresting the attention of those wishing to acquire knowledge on this subject, but it cannot be denied that it has a great impetus in inducing men to attend these schools for a considerable time in order to get a sound practical training. The greatest success attending this system of technical education has been at the Thames, where the teaching is carried on continuously by holding day classes for those who can attend, and night classes, which the workmen from the mines and others avail themselves of. The result of teaching at this school last year has been very encouraging, the average attendance being forty-five regular students, and fifty-one pupils from the public schools attending Saturday lectures. It is gratifying to find that many of the miners attending the night classes are taught drawing, mathematics, surveying, mining, geology, chemistry, and assaying. The large attendance at this school, and the great interest taken in the work, may be partly attributed to the mines at the Thames being concentrated within a small radius, which admits of the workmen attending at night, and also to the large number of mineral lodes in this part of the colony, containing complex and refractory ores, requiring different methods of treatment from that formerly adopted to make them pay for working.

The same system of teaching as at the Thames has been adopted at the Reefton school, but the success attending it has not been so encouraging. The instructor attributes this to the mines being situated a long distance from the town, which prevents the miners from attending. Seeing that this is the case the instructor will devote a portion of his time in giving instruction in the various schools on the West Coast, in order to revive the interest taken in them generally. In Reefton, although the centre of a large quartz-mining district, the mines are situated long distances apart, and as the workmen live near the place where they are employed they have not the same opportunities of attending the school as those residing in the Thames District.

It is very satisfactory to find that a number of those who have attended the schools have successfully passed the examination for mining manager's certificates, and I am informed that each examination shows better results than the preceding one. The expenditure on the