

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

Amongst the schools of mines where classes are regularly carried on are those at Thames, Reefton, Otago University, and Nelson, the instructors in the first two being officers of the department. The Otago University receives substantial assistance towards the payment of the instructor, while the Nelson classes are carried on by Mr. Worley, aid being granted in the form of plant, chemicals, and apparatus. The instruction given at these schools is becoming year by year of increasing importance. Valuable technical education is afforded at the Thames School, where students have opportunities of studying the practical methods of working mines and of assisting in the treatment of ores for the recovery of gold and silver. A new quartz-crushing plant, with all the latest improvements in reducing, and suitable for employing the various scientific processes for the extraction of bullion from ores of all classes, has been erected at this school by means of a grant from the Government. In the Otago School also the use of the new plant for the testing and treatment of ores has afforded students improved opportunities for obtaining the fullest information of a practical character.

The increase in the attendance at the above schools gives tangible evidence of the interest taken in the education afforded thereat, and the number of students who, after completing their terms, have secured important positions in New Zealand and elsewhere is a convincing proof of the excellence and utility of the knowledge imparted. It is gratifying to find that the extensive training required by those intending to become mining engineers can be secured by students who will follow out the various courses of instruction given in the schools of the colony, and consequently the necessity for the importation of experts trained in Europe and America will in the near future be obviated. That the demand for technical education of this character is very strongly felt amongst the mining community throughout the colony is evidenced by the fact that the Government has, in response to applications from those interested, either promised or actually granted subsidies for the establishment of Schools of Mines at Waipori, Westport, Waihi, Waitekauri, Karangahake, Coromandel, and Kuaotunu. It is anticipated that the instruction given at these smaller schools will induce students to follow up their technical education by attending the schools at the centres above referred to, where the services of highly-qualified instructors appointed by the Government are available.

There are at present two holders of scholarships awarded by this department availing themselves of the advantages of university education—viz., Messrs. James M. McLaren and W. H. Baker, both of the Thames, who are attending the classes at the Auckland and Otago Universities respectively.

The expenditure on Schools of Mines during the year was £1,682 19s. 5d., exclusive of teachers' salaries.

The formation of a New Zealand Institute of Mining Engineers on the lines of the parent Institute in England also shows that the importance of adequately training mining engineers for the practice of their profession is fully recognised in the colony, and the operations of the Institute should prove beneficial to the interests of mining in New Zealand.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE ON WORKS.

The total expenditure on works authorised by the department for the development of the mining industry for the year ending the 31st March last amounts to £44,771. These works consist of roads and tracks constructed by direct grants, £30,721; roads and tracks constructed by subsidies to local bodies, £1,759; water-races, £3,928; drainage-channels, £2,149; prospecting-works, £1,533; schools of mines, exclusive of salaries of teachers, £1,683; resumption of land for tailings-sites, £300; and prospecting deep levels, £2,698. The liabilities on the works in progress at the end of March last amounted to £69,616. A detailed statement of the expenditure on these works will be found in the tables annexed to the Inspecting Engineer's report.

KAURI COMPANY'S LANDS.

The development of the mining industry on the auriferous lands held by the Kauri Timber Company has been retarded by the somewhat prolonged