

Petroleum.—The Superior Oil Co. sunk two holes—namely, the Stantiall, at Marton, and the Young, at Mount Stewart, near Palmerston North. The former was carried down to 6,877 ft. (though basement rock was reached at 6,842 ft.), and the latter to 3,395 ft., the basement being met at 3,361 ft. No results were obtained from either hole.

The New Zealand Petroleum Co. sunk its Devon bore, at Taranaki, to 9,420 ft., but so far has met with no success, though work continues in the testing of sand horizons. Basement rocks were encountered at 9,388 ft.

Moturoa Oilfields, Ltd., got the following from its three producing wells: No. 1, 4,348 gallons; No. 2, 60,568 gallons; and No. 4, 21,257 gallons; or a total of 86,173 gallons. The oil was all treated by N.Z. Oil Refineries, Ltd., New Plymouth.

ACCIDENTS.

One fatality occurred, the victim being Mr. W. Sinclair, foreman, Grant's serpentine-mine, Wayby. Mr. Sinclair was asphyxiated by and suffered other injuries from a large fall which came away from the face of an open cut in an unexpected manner. There was one serious non-fatal accident, the victim of which was Mr. M. Brown, of the Sylvia Mine, Thames. Mr. Brown was engaged in mucking work after blasting in the shaft (which is now being sunk) and apparently overloaded the bucket, for a stone fell from same when being hoisted and struck him on the back, with the result that he suffered four broken ribs and a punctured lung.

PROSECUTIONS.

There were no prosecutions.

WEST COAST INSPECTION DISTRICT (G. W. LOWES AND R. C. RUFFIN, INSPECTORS OF MINES).

QUARTZ-MINING.

Marlborough County.

Golden Bar Mine (Mines Department), Wakamarina.—This mine was prospected by the Mines Department during the year. No. 2 level was extended to the end of the ore-body and subsequently broke through to daylight to facilitate ventilation. At a selected point a rise was put up, to a height of 60 ft. above rail-level, and driven north and south to form an intermediate level. All the development work carried out was done on an ore-body varying from 3 ft. to 6 ft. in width; consequently a considerable tonnage of ore was broken and developed, but gold and scheelite values are yet to be determined.

Buller, Grey, Westland, and Murchison Counties.

Lode prospecting in the above counties has practically ceased, there being no activity of importance during the year.

Inangahua County.

Blackwater Mine, Waiuta.—The development programme for the year had to be somewhat curtailed, due to the shortage of labour, nevertheless a total advance of 2,438 ft. was accomplished, being considerably in excess of the footage advanced during the previous year.

Of the total advance, driving contributed 1,462 ft., of which 1,023 ft., or 70 per cent., exposed reef averaging 12.23 dwt. over a width of 26 in.

The results obtained from the main development points were as follows:—

No. 13 Level Drive North: This drive was advanced with the object of locating and proving the low-grade ore exposed in the north end of the No. 11 level beyond the so-called "Prohibition Block." However, after driving a distance of 49 ft. in country, the drive was stopped in order to release the men employed there for more productive work.

No. 14 Level Drive South: This drive was advanced 273 ft., all of which exposed reef, 189 ft. averaging 11.83 dwt. over 42 in. wide, and the remaining 84 ft. being on unpayable reef averaging 3.76 dwt. over 44 in. wide. The latter stretch corresponds with an unpayable stretch encountered on the level above.

No. 15 Level Drive North: This drive advanced 708 ft., of which 510 ft. exposed reef averaging 14.21 dwt. over a width of 19 in.

No. 15 Level Drive South: This drive was advanced 432 ft., of which 237 ft. exposed reef averaging 14.89 dwt. over a width of 24 in.

The proportion of driving through country on the No. 15 level might appear unduly high, but owing to the proximity of the reef to the shaft on this level, and in order to make a shaft crosscut of sufficient length to deal with trucking, the drives north and south were started in country rock at the required distance from the shaft, and 243 ft. of driving was done in country rock before intercepting the reef and the driving on reef commenced.

On comparing the reef exposed on the bottom level, No. 15, with the same stretch of reef on No. 14 level, the value has increased by 1.38 dwt., although the width has decreased by 3½ in.

Future development will depend entirely on the labour available, but the work of opening up the reef north and south on No. 15 level will definitely be continued.

No shaft-sinking was carried out during the year.

Alexander Mine.—Stoping was confined to two blocks above No. 6 level from a reef averaging 3 ft. in width. Very flat dips were met during exploitation of the lode, making mining more difficult and expensive. Owing to the shortage of labour, only a small amount of development work was carried out in No. 6 level; consequently the mine has had to draw upon reserves for a considerable time and cannot hope to supplement them until conditions become more favourable.

Big River Mine.—Considerable difficulty was experienced in retimbering the main shaft from No. 7 to No. 8 level, but it was eventually accomplished, and No. 8 chamber was repaired by August. When the low level was reached it was found that the long crosscut was in first-class order, thereby considerably reducing the expense in driving to cut the lode, on which a winze was sunk from No. 7 level and a block of ore proved to a depth of 80 ft. Lack of skilled labour, especially winding-engine drivers, compelled the directors to close down the mine early in September.

Golden Treasure Mine.—This mining claim, operated by the Mines Department, was closed down early in the year and the plant removed to Glenorchy. The last work carried out in the mine was the sinking of a winze between two intermediate levels, and the discovery of a small amount of high-grade ore was reported.

DREDGE MINING.

Inangahua County.

Slab Hut Dredge, Mawheraiti.—This dredge commenced to operate in June. The dredge is equipped with 6 cubic feet close-coupled buckets and utilizes a total of 370 h.p. supplied by the Grey Electric-power Board. The dredge handled 463,162 cubic yards at a cost comparable with other dredges operating in this district. The shallow dredging depth of 20 ft. in fairly loose creek gravels is a factor favourable to the company at a time when replacement parts are costly and difficult to obtain.

Snowy River Dredge, Ikamatua.—This dredge had another successful year and dug slightly over 1,000,000 yards of high-grade ground. The dredge is favourably situated for low-cost production, having to handle easy-dug gravels up to an average depth of 12 ft.

Grey River Dredge, Ikamatua.—This dredge operated for 5,932 hours and dug an area of 121 acres, equivalent to 4,164,613 cubic yards of wash, for a recovery of 8.03d. per cubic yard.