

Taken as a whole, the measure of safety which is attained by the mining industry of the colony compares very favourably with that of many other industries which are admittedly less dangerous, and bespeaks considerable care on the part of those upon whom the charge of mining operations devolves.

SHALE-OIL.

The new works at Orepuki have now got into full working-order, and oils of various grades, adapted for both burning and lubricating purposes, as well as other products obtainable from the distillates of shale, have been produced. Doubtless it will take a little time to find a market for the entire production of the works, but it is to be hoped that the enterprise of the company will be rewarded in the near future.

SULPHUR.

During the year 1901 the quantity of sulphur exported amounted to 143 tons, this being a decrease of 1,549 tons as compared with the output of the preceding year.

KAURI-GUM.

As previously remarked, the output for the year showed a considerable decrease, the export returns showing 7,541 tons, valued at £446,114, as compared with an export of 10,159 tons, having a value of £622,293, for the year 1900.

SCHEELITE.

Messrs. Donaldson Bros., at Macrae's (Otago), are the only people in the colony who prepare this mineral for the market. The mineral exists in other claims, but nothing is being done at the batteries to separate it from the quartz sands.

ANTIMONY.

Further prospecting at Alexandra South (Otago) has proved the continuity of the lode, and trial shipments of the ore have been exported with the object of its being tested on a fair scale.

HÆMATITE PAINT.

The manufacture of this is still carried on at Thames and Parapara.

OTHER MINERALS.

Pending the formation of a company to work the cinnabar lode near Waitahuna (Otago) operations are suspended. Nothing further appears to have been done to work copper or chrome ore.

An interesting and valuable discovery of rock phosphate has been made at Clarendon, near Milton (Otago). Analysis shows this to be of a quality suited for application to land, and also for the manufacture of superphosphates. It is possible that the mineral may also be found associated with the limestone rocks in other parts of Otago.

ROADS AND TRACKS.

The expenditure on roads and tracks for the year was £47,573 4s. 3d., this being a decrease of £844 3s. as compared with that of the preceding twelve months. Subsidies to local bodies amounted to £2,812 3s. 7d., and the sum of £44,761 0s. 8d. has been expended in direct grants for roads and tracks in mining districts. The total expenditure by the Department under this heading during the past twenty years amounts to £418,665 18s. 10d. and £101,258 17s. 9d. respectively.

GEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS.

During the year the attention of the Geologist was largely directed towards the classification of mineral specimens, and in the preparation of reports on various geological examinations. Attention was also given to the examination of the West Coast coalfields, in view of the proposal to establish Government collieries; and a special examination of the district round Cheviot was made in connection with the seismic disturbances which occurred there during the latter part of last and the early part of the present year. A report on the latter has just been published.