

HÆMATITE PAINT.

The manufacture of paint from hæmatite is carried on at Thames and at Parapara.

Hæmatite for dyeing purposes is also obtained at Mataura (Southland), and is used at the paper-mills there.

GALENA.

Nothing further has, as yet, been done towards the working of the deposits near Te Aroha on a commercial scale. Bulk samples have been sent to Australia for treatment, but no return of the results obtained has been furnished to the Department.

IRON.

The terms of a lease have been arranged for working the deposits of iron-ore at Parapara. With the erection of ironworks in this locality, subsequent smelting of the ore, and the manufacture of various qualities of finished iron, the colony would have an industry of the greatest utility. The practicability of working the ironsand deposits of Taranaki has also attracted attention, and it is possible that, in conjunction with the extensive Parapara deposits of ore, they may be utilised to the direct benefit of New Zealand.

ROCK PHOSPHATE.

The demand for this mineral for the preparation of fertilising material continues to increase. During last year about 4,400 tons of rock was quarried. Since its discovery near Milton (Otago), attention has been directed to other limestone deposits in various places, with the object of locating further areas of rock phosphate.

PETROLEUM.

Prospecting for the natural oil has been carried on to some extent in both Islands, but so far nothing of commercial importance has been reported. The question is one which continues to engage attention, and it is proposed to bring down a Bill dealing with the matter.

OTHER MINERALS.

Platinum in small quantities is obtained at Round Hill Gold-mining Claims in Southland. It is also present to a limited extent in the gold-bearing wash near Takaka, but hitherto no attempts have been made to save it.

Cinnabar has not yet become a commercial product, although known to exist both in Otago and the West Coast Districts. Prospecting operations are carried on to some extent at Waitahuna Heights, near Lawrence.

There is a probability of copper-ore being again mined in the Nelson District, and operations have been put in hand to reopen a mine worked some years ago.

The extraction of oil and other products of shale at Orepuki has ceased for the time being. The mine and works are closed down.

ROADS AND TRACKS.

The expenditure on roads and tracks during the financial year amounted to £45,594 3s. 1d., this being a decrease of £6,096 2s. 3d. as compared with the expenditure of the preceding year. The sum of £466 6s. 9d. was paid in subsidies to local bodies, and roads constructed by direct grants have absorbed £45,127 16s. 4d. During the past twenty-two years the sums expended in subsidies and grants amount to £565,518 19s. 8d.

DEPARTMENTAL.

The work of the Department has been satisfactorily carried out by the staffs stationed at the various centres, and the inspection of mines is conducted in a careful and painstaking manner.