

The total value of gold, silver, coal, and other minerals (including kauri-gum) produced up to the end of 1903 was £85,813,240.

During the first six months of the present year (ending the 30th June) an increase in the amount of gold and silver exported, as compared with the corresponding portion of last year, is shown in the following table of comparisons, which is compiled from Customs returns:—

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT of GOLD and SILVER entered for EXPORT during the First Half of the Years 1903 and 1904.

	Half-year ending 30th June, 1903.		Half-year ending 30th June, 1904.		Increase for First Half of 1904.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
	Oz.	£	Oz.	£	Oz.	£
Gold	257,198	977,821	267,305	1,024,082	10,107	46,261
Silver	495,268	48,891	522,335	54,149	27,067	5,258
	752,466	1,026,712	789,640	1,078,231	37,174	51,519

GOLD EXPORT.

The quantity of gold entered for exportation through the Customs for the year 1903 was as follows:—Auckland, 232,681 oz.; Marlborough, 972 oz.; Nelson, 7,962 oz.; West Coast, 125,241 oz.; Otago and Southland, 166,458 oz.: total, 533,314 oz.

GOLD-MINING.

QUARTZ.

This branch of the mining industry continues to maintain a high position in the production of the colony's output of gold, and is also responsible for the whole of the silver obtained in New Zealand. So far as the Northern District is concerned, the working of quartz reefs is the only source of winning the precious metals, as, unlike portions of the mining districts of the Middle Island, alluvial goldfields are not known.

As usual, the Ohinemuri County has been the scene of the greatest activity, the mines at Waihi and Karangahake being the chief producers of gold and silver. The mines and mills of the Waihi Gold-mining Company are not only the most extensive in the colony, but may be classed among the largest gold-mining concerns in the world. Last year the company treated 214,508 tons of quartz for a return of £603,167 8s. 9d., employed upwards of 1,100 persons, and paid dividends amounting to a quarter of a million sterling. Extensive additions have been made by the company to their plant, and developments in the mine show that the ore-bodies will admit of a large production for a considerable number of years. Prospecting-work at the neighbouring mine owned by the Waihi Grand Junction Gold-mining Company has demonstrated further possibilities for the Waihi Goldfield, and, as a result of the discoveries made by the last-named company, preparations for the production of ore are now in progress, and a large modern battery and cyanide plant are to be erected. An increased production of bullion may therefore be reasonably looked for from this district in the near future. Other companies holding claims in the same locality are devoting attention to prospecting operations, in the hope of locating payable reefs.

At Karangahake, bullion to the value of £182,094 12s. 1d. was obtained during the year, the mines and mills providing employment for 452 persons. The New Zealand Crown Mines and the Talisman Consolidated mines are the only two properties at present working on a productive scale. The Woodstock Mine only worked during the early part of last year, and has not been so successful as anticipated, but may possibly pay in conjunction with one or two other of the adjoining mines.

Mining at Waitekauri has been very quiet during the last two years, owing principally to large bodies of calcite taking the place of quartz in the reefs.