

COPPER.

A considerable amount of inquiry has been made respecting lodes of copper-ore. Deposits are known to exist in both Islands, and a considerable amount of prospecting-work has been done in the locality of Nelson. I understand that the Mineral Belt Company's property has recently been sold, and that it is proposed to work the mine and smelt the ore at an early date.

PETROLEUM.

Since my last report, petroleum has been struck in the borehole at Moturoa, near New Plymouth breakwater, at a depth of over 2,300 ft. Considerable difficulty was experienced in shutting off the water from the borehole, and since the oil-bearing ground was pierced much time has been taken up and expense incurred in tubing the hole afresh to accomplish the desired object. The crude oil is considered of excellent quality. Natural gas in large quantities is also given off at the borehole.

As probably indicative of the existence of petroleum elsewhere in the New Plymouth district, it may be remarked that natural gas is frequently met with at several places between Inglewood and Moturoa, and the result of oil being obtained at the last-named place has naturally caused speculators to turn their attention to other likely parts of the district. Some further interest is also being taken in the question at Kotuku, near Greymouth, a locality in which crude petroleum in small quantities has been seen for several years past. Some three years ago attempts were made by boring to ascertain the existence of petroleum in commercial quantity, but were given up without any very great depth having been attained.

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

The several schools of mines throughout the colony have been carried on throughout the year at the various centres of metalliferous mining, and the instruction given has enabled several students to qualify for certificates as mine-managers and battery-superintendents. These institutions serve a very good purpose in the colony by assisting young men to qualify for responsible positions connected with the mining industry.

Two scholarships were won at the recent examinations of schools-of-mines students, the successful students being Mr. L. Andrew, of the Thames School, and Mr. J. Williams, of the Reefton School.

The annual reports of the several schools for the year ending the 31st December, 1905, follow :—

THAMES SCHOOL OF MINES.

The Director, Mr. O. G. Adams, A.O.S.M., reports as follows :—

I have the honour to report as follows on the work of the Thames School of Mines during 1905.

It is with pleasure I state that the attendance at the school has greatly improved. This is mainly due to the increased prosperity of Thames. A pleasing feature is that the attendance shows every prospect of still farther increasing, the numbers for the beginning of 1906 being considerably in advance of the maximum reached in 1905.

The following is a summary of the attendances for 1905 :—

	First Term.	Second Term.	Third Term.
Registered students	49	51	40
Saturday science students	28	33	36
Total students	77	84	76
Class attendance registered students	108	117	88
Total class attendance	136	150	124

The results of the annual examinations are very satisfactory, but they do not measure the work done during the year owing to the rooted objection many students have to sitting for examination. This is to be regretted, for an examination is a valuable experience for a student : it shows him how much he really knows ; prepares him for the examination for mine-managers' and battery-superintendents' certificates ; and should he pass, the school-of-mines certificate in that subject is awarded to him, and this is a valuable testimonial in the mining world. The results of the examinations follow :—

Theoretical chemistry, elementary : First class—J. Paul 76 per cent. ; second class—N. Wylie 68 per cent., S. Grigg 66 per cent., J. Richard 64 per cent., H. Baker 64 per cent., M. Grigg 62 per cent. ; third class—L. May 54 per cent., A. Wylie 44 per cent. Theoretical chemistry, senior : First class—L. Andrew 76 per cent. ; third class—L. Kitching 45 per cent. Practical chemistry, junior : Second class—A. G. Menzies 62 per cent. Practical chemistry, senior : First class—L. Andrew 77 per cent. ; third class—L. Kitching 48 per cent. Practical assaying, junior : Third class—E. L. Trower 53 per cent., R. W. Adams 41 per cent. Practical assaying, senior : First class—L. Adams 77 per cent., A. N. Baker 74 per cent., L. Kitching 70 per cent. Practical assaying, wet, senior : Third class—L. Kitching 53 per cent. General and mining geology : First class—Y. Booker 85 per cent., L. Andrew 76 per cent., L. Kitching 76 per cent. Mineralogy : First class—Y. Booker 70 per cent. Metallurgy : First class—L. Kitching 84 per cent., L. Andrew 83 per cent. Mining : First class—L. Andrew 86 per cent., S. G. Baker 74 per cent. ; second class—L. Kitching 66 per cent., L. Antridge 63 per cent. Ventilation : First class—L. Andrew 76 per cent., L. Kitching 71 per cent. Explosives : First class—L. Kitching 88 per cent., J. Crawford, 72 per cent., S. G. Baker 72 per cent. ; second class—L. Antridge 64 per cent.