

HYDRAULIC AND ALLUVIAL MINING.

This branch of the mining industry covers a very extensive area in the goldfields of the Middle Island. The principal districts in which it is carried on are Nelson, Westland, Otago, and Southland. There are no great developments to record, but a steady output has been maintained, the returns showing an increase over those of last year.

The experiment of working alluvial flats by dredging has not proved the success that was anticipated, and a return, in many cases, has been made to the former method of hydraulic elevating and sluicing.

DREDGE MINING.

This industry is now being worked on a commercial instead of a speculative basis, and a steady output of gold is maintained. The manner in which dredging is carried on in the Southland flats proves that these areas are very valuable, and if the planting of forest-trees on the ground operated on is proceeded with the dredging of these flats will not be so detrimental from the pastoral point of view as many people imagine, as the land is improved rather than deteriorated. Notable examples of this improvement can be seen in the Waikaka Valley, Southland, where the sluice-box method of dredging is generally in vogue.

COAL-MINING.

A very marked increase in the production of coal and lignite is recorded for the past year, the total output being 1,585,756 tons, as compared with 1,537,838 tons produced during the year 1904. The increase for the year 1905 was 47,918 tons, as against that of 117,609 tons recorded for the previous year, the output of the several districts being shown in the following table of comparisons :—

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT of COAL and LIGNITE raised during the Years 1905 and 1904.

—			Output for 1905.	Increase for 1905 over 1904.	Output for 1904.	Increase for 1904 over 1903.
			Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Northern District	...	...	259,876	17,359	242,517	32,722
West Coast District	...	...	856,227	19,277	836,950	55,918
Southern District	...	...	469,653	11,282	458,371	28,969
Totals	...	...	1,585,756	47,918	1,537,838	117,609

The comparative tonnage of the various classes of coal, &c., for the years 1905 and 1904 is summarised as follows :—

Class of Coal, &c.				Output for 1905.	Output for 1904.	Increase for 1905.
				Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Bituminous and semi-bituminous coal	...	...	...	965,083	938,518	26,565
Pitch-coal	...	...	...	23,072	24,506	1,434*
Brown coal	...	...	...	496,936	483,858	13,078
Lignite	...	...	...	100,665	90,956	9,709
Totals	...	...	...	1,585,756	1,537,838	47,918

* Decrease.

The total recorded output of the various classes of coal, lignite, and oil-shale is now 21,701,419 tons.