

The prosperity of our quartz-mining companies is demonstrated by the fact that during 1907 they paid in dividends £628,866, equivalent to 40·7 per cent. of the value of the bullion won by them, which, with one exception, is the highest proportion so paid in any country. The Waihi Gold-mining Company declared during the year £396,726 in dividends, as the result of treating 356,974 tons of ore, for a return of £826,010. The total dividends paid by this company to the end of 1907 amount to £2,693,274.

The Waihi Grand Junction Gold-mining Company, which adjoins the Waihi Mine, and operates upon a continuation of the same vein system, has increased its production with the attainment of depth; the yield from this mine during the past year was £71,742, as the result of treating 40,875 tons of ore.

On the Karangahake Goldfield, the Talisman Consolidated Mine has been most successful, the production for the year constituting a record for this goldfield; £184,446 was obtained from 46,025 tons treated, at the high average value of £4 0s. 2d. per ton, and £75,000 was declared in dividends.

The features of the year on the Ohinemuri Goldfield have been the steadily increasing bullion-producing powers of the Waihi and Talisman Mines, the result of enhanced ore values obtained from the development of the deepest levels, together with more complete extraction of the precious metals.

On the Thames Goldfield, formerly the most productive in the Dominion, there has been a decline in the gold-production, due to the practical exhaustion of many of the most important mines above water-level. It is satisfactory to report, however, that a commencement has been made in deep sinking and unwatering operations from the Queen of Beauty pumping-shaft by the May Queen Company. Owing to the central position of this shaft, these operations, when completed, will enable the whole of the valuable area, from which bullion to the value of between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000 sterling has been won, to be made easily accessible at the lowest levels by means of cross-cuts of inconsiderable length from the Queen of Beauty shaft. These deep-sinking and unwatering operations are subsidised by the Government, as the work is considered of national importance.

During the past year a slight decline in the production of gold from the Reefton Goldfield has occurred, but developments of recent date indicate that an improvement may be expected during the present year. The most important feature of this goldfield during 1907 was the development of a reef of considerable thickness at the No. 11 level (1,450 ft.) in the Progress Mine, which disbursed £34,375 in dividends during the year.

The Consolidated Goldfields (Limited) improved their output and gold-production at the Wealth of Nations and Golden Fleece Mines, and carried out considerable underground developments.

Some rich ore has recently been met with at the New Big River Mine; 600 tons yielded gold to the value of over £3,000.

The Blackwater Mines (Limited), on the newly discovered Blackwater Goldfield, have erected winding plant and equipment, and developed their mine, with a view to starting milling operations when the plant now being installed is completed. The discovery of this promising field was due largely to the prospecting subsidy granted by the Government.

ALLUVIAL AND DREDGE MINING.

The decreased gold-yield last year was undoubtedly accelerated by shortage of water for sluicing purposes, which prevented many claims from working in Central Otago and the West Coast for nearly half the year. The most important event during 1907 in this branch of mining was the formation of a company for the purpose of unwatering and working the deep auriferous gravels of Ross Flat, Westland. During the early days of mining this goldfield produced a large quantity of gold from the shallow ground before operations had to be abandoned, owing to the inundation of the workings. The company proposes to generate electric power at the Kanieri Forks for transmission to the mines, a distance of about twenty-two miles, to be there used for pumping and general mining purposes. This work, being the first serious attempt to operate the deep alluvial deposits of this Dominion, has received a substantial Government subsidy.