

ROSS.

Mont d'Or (J. McKay, manager).—Although the costly break in the water-races during March last restricted sluicing operations to a working period of 154 days of ten hours, the return of bullion obtained was 1,019 oz. 5 dwt. 13 gr., valued at £3,995 ls. 1d., which shows a decrease of 70 oz., valued at £254 8s. 11d., as compared with the preceding year. Three dividends of 1s. each, amounting to £1,800, were paid. One notable feature that has long existed against the productive capacities of this extensive proposition is that advantage has not been taken to provide sufficient level to drain the deeper deposits, which, according to recent shaft-prospecting, are highly auriferous. Meanwhile the water-races are all in good order, and, with the promise which the various working-faces afford, output should show a high average, provided the water-supply is favourable. Economy in working operations and immunity from accident continue satisfactory, while the minimum wage is 11s. per day.

MacLeod's Terrace Hydraulic Sluicing Company (Fergus MacLeod in charge).—When visited on the 20th September, 1907, all works were suspended, owing to shortage of water. Returns for the year, nil.

Park Terrace.—Coghlan and party having dissolved partnership and surrendered the claim, it was taken up later by Ford and party, who have sunk a shaft to a depth of 75 ft., intersecting a body of washdirt 5 ft. in thickness, in which driving has been extended 28 ft.; but, owing to a heavy inflow of water, the shaft filled to a depth of 17 ft. in twenty-four hours. The prospects obtained from the shaft gave very promising results.

Jones Creek Storm Channel.—A grant of £100 was made to the Ross Borough Council towards repairs to this channel.

Rimu Syndicate, who hold prospecting licenses over 600 acres, have sunk two shafts to respective depths of 63 ft. and 72 ft., while the results so far obtained are stated by them to be highly satisfactory. Efficient water-supply for hydraulic elevating and sluicing could be obtained by electrically driven pumps from the Hokitika River.

WAIHO.

The Westland Hydraulic and Dredging Company is closed down and protection granted.

Omawa.—With the exception of the beachcombers, Friend and party (two men) were the only men working at Omawa, chiefly engaged in development.

DREDGING.

In comparing the returns for the years 1906 and 1907, it is evident that the dredging industry continues to show a gradual decline, both in values and number of men employed. The gold won for 1907 as against 1906 was a decrease of 2,700 oz. 3 dwt. 1 gr., valued at £10,406 ls.; and number of persons employed, a decrease of thirty-seven. Although two new companies started operations during the year, the total working dredging fleet shows a decrease of five as compared with the previous year. The Worksof Dredging Company are rebuilding the old Lagoons dredge, to work the Antonio's Creek.

MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

COPPER.

Maoriland Copper Company.—United Mine: During the year development has been chiefly confined to No. 7 level, which has been extended for 364 ft., and 207 ft. of crosscutting done. In No. 1 crosscut, a leader of ore 6 in. to 1 ft. in thickness was met with, and followed for 46 ft., showing signs of increasing underfoot. Payable ore was met with in the wider parts. The work done at the Monster Mine has been of a prospecting nature, to determine the extent and dip of the ore-body. Two winzes have been sunk, and a crosscut is being driven from an old level, in order to connect the bottom of No. 2 winze with a rise. The Champion Mine was recently reopened, and unwatered by a steam-pump, which raised 500,000 gallons. The No. 1 drive has been overhauled for 170 ft., but to reach the old face a large amount of work is still required, and the winzes on the lower level are in a bad state of repair, and will require to be retimbered. Doctor's Drive has been reopened for a distance of 224 ft. This appears to be a strong formation, but the extent and values cannot yet be determined. The 150 ft. shaft of this mine has not been explored, as the erection of the head-gear and winding-engine is not yet completed. On the Mount Claude group of mines no work has been done. A sawmill has been installed to cut timber for mining purposes, including rails wanted for the various tramways to connect the United and Champion Mines with the smelter-site. The necessary levels and excavations have been prepared for the smelting plant, and the furnace will be constructed directly the materials ordered are to hand.

Mount Radiant.—With the exception of ten men, engaged in road-construction, all work is temporarily suspended on the field, but surveys of special claims are being made.

IRON.

Parapara Iron Lease (held by the Public Trustee, as executor of the late Sir A. J. Cadman).—The varied developments so far carried out on this lease are confined chiefly to surface-works, which give no detailed information relative to the probable extent and values of the ore-bodies. These works comprise one mile of railway-construction; jetty 240 ft. in length, with wharf-accommodation (60 ft. by 40 ft.) added; and certain alterations to county road as affected by railway-works; together with useful lengths of saddle-tracks for the convenience of the workmen. Meanwhile the lease is under legal protection.