

(3.) ALLUVIAL MINING.

The abundant rainfall during 1911 permitted more continuous sluicing operations than have been experienced during recent years, with the result that there has been an increase in the value of the gold-production from this source amounting to £86,752, the total production being £275,216, obtained from 277 claims, upon which 2,452 persons were ordinarily employed.

On the West Coast the Mont d'Or Mining Company, at Ross, was unfortunate, owing to the collapse of a tunnel conduit, which delayed sluicing for a lengthy period. Notwithstanding this, however, from between three and four months sluicing subsequently, gold to the value of £3,493 was obtained, and £1,800 was distributed in dividends. The total dividends paid by this company now amount to £51,600.

In the neighbourhood of Kumara, at Westbrook and Maori Point, the claim-holders have been engaged in making preparations for the utilization of a greatly increased water-supply, owing to the extension of the Kumara (Government) Water-race by inverted siphon of 30 in. bore across the Tara-makau Valley, a distance of 2 miles 1 chain. This siphon delivers 36 cubic feet of water per second into the distributing water-race, which traverses the higher terraces above the claims, and with its high-level storage-dam will be capable of supplying 50 cubic feet of water per second for twelve hours each day. The sluice-gates admitting water from the head-race to the siphon were officially opened on the 12th April, 1912, by the Hon. James Colvin, Minister of Mines. Some illustrations of interesting features in the main accompany this report.

Details as to the year's operations at the respective alluvial claims throughout the Dominion are contained in the reports of the Inspectors of Mines (Annexure A). The following is a list of the most profitably worked alluvial gold-mining claims the property of registered companies, also the production therefrom and the amount of dividends declared :—

Name of Company.	During 1911.	
	Value of Gold produced.	Dividends declared.
	£	£
Mont d'Or Gold-mining Company	3,493	1,800
Round Hill Mining Company	6,743	1,130
Nokomai Hydraulic-sluicing Company	9,007	600
Undaunted Gold-mining Company	2,054	375
Ladysmith Gold-mining Company	1,935	496
Golden Crescent Sluicing Company (Limited)	2,400	875
Havelock Sluicing Company	3,989	1,400
Deep Stream Gold-mining Company	928	312

From the foregoing it will be seen that the profits from alluvial mines are generally inconsiderable. The theory frequently advanced that poor ground may be worked profitably if only a large volume of water is conveyed thereto has frequently proved fallacious. The construction of large and sometimes lengthy conduits to the claims often necessitates a greater capital-expenditure than may be recovered from the low-grade wash, and work is frequently intermittent, owing to the irregularity of a large water-supply, which is always dependent upon copious rainfall.

V. MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

SCHEELITE.

The quantity of scheelite exported during the year amounted to 138 tons, valued at £11,853, as compared with 143 tons, valued at £15,070, in 1910. The main sources of supply are Glenorchy (Lake Wakatipu) and Macrae's (Otago). The following statement shows the quantity and value of scheelite exported since the year 1899 :—

Year.	Quantity.	Value.	Year.	Quantity.	Value.
	Tons.	£		Tons.	£
1899	32	2,788	1907	137	15,486
1900	54	2,635	1908	68	6,055
1901	2	83	1909	58	4,263
1902	39	1,200	1910	143	15,070
1903	42	1,439	1911	138	11,853
1904	17	791			
1905	28	1,848	Total	813	66,918
1906	55	3,407			