

WEST COAST INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. J. F. DOWNEY, Inspector of Mines).

Quartz-mining.

MARLBOROUGH.

Dominion Consolidated Mining and Development Company (Limited).—Work has proceeded steadily throughout the year, and developments have been very fair. The most important have been in connection with the Golden Bar property, where the driving of Nos. 1 and 2 adits has opened up a large reef carrying fair values in gold and a certain amount of scheelite. The Empire City Mine, from which the bulk of the scheelite was formerly obtained, has not shown such good development, but will continue to produce for some time yet. Shortage of men has hampered operations considerably, and has been responsible to a great extent for a decreased production for the year. The gold-production was 1,844 oz. 13 dwt., valued at £6,873 7s. 2d., and the scheelite 28 tons, valued at £5,005.

Deep Creek Gold-mining Syndicate.—Very little development work has been carried out on the property, but the erection of a battery has been practically completed, and a good deal of work done in the way of making roads and tramways.

Alford and Party (Mountain Camp).—Developments here have not been satisfactory. The reef was very flat, and in hard country. When picked up by a rise from the bottom level it was very small. Work on the property has practically ceased for the time being.

Cadigan's Treatment Works.—This consists of a small concentrating plant erected by Mr. J. M. Cadigan to recover scheelite from the residues from the Dominion Consolidated Company's battery. The plant seems to be working well. Trials with a primitive plant showed definite saving of scheelite, and the proprietor has now installed a Californian slime-table, from which much better results are expected. Some 3½ tons of scheelite, valued at £520, was recovered to the end of the year.

NELSON.

Colossus Gold-mining Development Company (Limited).—This company has been carrying out prospecting operations in the Wangapeka district, particularly on Blue Creek and Nuggety Creek, with what appear to be encouraging results. On one reef at Blue Creek, known as the O'Malley reef, some 210 ft. of driving was done, and a shoot of pay-ore from 60 ft. to 70 ft. in length is claimed to have been revealed. Another reef has also been located, which the management claims gives colours by crushing and panning. Very little work has, however, been done on it. An average of six men has been employed. There is no other quartz-mining in the Nelson district.

LYELL.

New Alpine Consols Company.—Further work was done on the shoot of stone struck in the extension of the Tyr Connel tunnel, but as the stone was much disturbed at this level it was determined to start a new drive on the reef-line at a depth of 250 ft. below the old tunnel. Good progress was made with this low-level tunnel, and at about 200 ft. in a shoot of stone was met with which at the time of writing had been driven on for some 50 ft., was up to 4 ft. wide, and showed gold. This mine promises well.

CAPLESTON.

Boatman's Consolidated Gold-mining Company (Limited).—The work of sinking the Fiery Cross shaft has been steadily continued, and to the end of the year it had reached a depth of 1,012 ft. It is the intention of the company to continue the shaft to 1,025 ft., then open out at the 1,000 ft. level. Up to the 30th September, 1917, the sum of £21,816 19s. 1d. had been expended by the company. No other mining was done.

REEFTON.

Blackwater Mine.—Development work has been carried on steadily during the year, although the shortage of labour has restricted operations. On the whole developments have been good, the bottom level, No. 8 (1,214 ft.), opening up very well. The level is apparently in much more settled country than either Nos. 6 or 7 levels, and a particularly satisfactory feature in the development was the discovery of two valuable shoots of pay-stone in the south end, which have not been worked at any upper level. The location of these shoots promises a considerably longer life to the mine. The length of the payable stone on this level is now almost as great as at any stage of the mine's development, and the values appear to be living down in a fairly satisfactory way. The stopes over Nos. 5, 6, and 7 levels have also opened up well, and the north ends of these levels may be said to all look well. The returns from the mine still show a decrease, but it is not so great as during 1916, being only £15,844, as compared with £30,000 for the year mentioned. This falling-off has been mainly due to shortage of labour. Throughout the year there has been little more than enough men to man one shift. There seems, however, to be a slight falling-away in values, the average being £1 16s. 5d. for 1917, as against £1 19s. 6d. for 1916.

Blackwater South Mine.—A little further prospecting-work was done here without any development of importance.

Cumberland Mine.—No development work has been done for the year, litigation in connection with the Scotia claim having a good deal to do with the arrest of operations.

Energetic Extended.—Prospecting operations were continued through a considerable part of the year, from two to six men being employed, but nothing of any value was found.

Keep-it-Dark Mine.—Ventilation was re-established, and work resumed. Development work has been confined to No. 8 level, where several blocks of stone have been opened up in the south drive, but the values were not high. These developments were on the west reef, which has always been