

REEFTON.

Blackwater Mines.—The main shaft of this mine was sunk a farther 221 ft., and chambers were cut for Nos. 10 and 11 levels. The total depth of the shaft is now, including 25 ft. for sump, 1,690 ft. Further development carried out was as follows: No. 6 level south was extended 239 ft., of which 208 ft. was on reef averaging 19·1 in., with average value 11·08 dwt. No. 7 level south was extended 106 ft., of which 73 ft. was on reef averaging 12·97 in., with average value 12·45 dwt. No. 8 level south was driven 120 ft., of which 89 ft. was on reef averaging 6·45 in., with average value 5·22 dwt. No. 9 level south was extended 196 ft., of which 111 ft. was on reef averaging 42·48 in., with average value 11·36 dwt. No. 9 north was driven 17½ ft., all off reef. A large reef has, however, been since picked up in this latter drive. A certain amount of rising and winzing was also done in the southern section of the mine. No dividends were paid during the year, and continued scarcity of suitable labour seriously retarded output. The amount of stone crushed was approximately the same as during 1919, being 24,468 tons, as compared with 24,969 tons. The total value received for gold won was £58,887 18s. 9d., which showed a considerably better average per ton than during the previous year. This increase in value was, however, due to premiums received on gold sold overseas. Deducting the premium, the average value, based on the figures of previous years, showed a falling-off of 1s. 1d. per ton as compared with those of 1919.

Blackwater South Mine.—Owing to no road yet having been provided to the site of the proposed main shaft no work has been done on this property. Approval has, however, now been given to the expenditure of a grant for the construction of this road, and it is expected that the sinking of the shaft will be started during the coming year.

North Blackwater Mine.—During the year attention has been devoted to pushing on with the erection of a large air-compressing and winding plant. This is not yet completed, but everything should be ready for the resumption of underground work in about three months' time.

Murray Creek Mine.—Practically the only work done on this property during 1920 was the sinking of two winzes below the bottom (No. 4) level with a view to determining whether the gold-bearing shoot lived down. One of these winzes was sunk to a depth of 47 ft., and the other to 94 ft. In the first the quartz cut out at a comparatively shallow depth, but in the latter more or less was got down to about 60 ft., but it was in broken or bouldery form. The values in such quartz as was got was said to be equal to those of the reef above No. 4 level. The mine ceased active operations in October, but I understand it is the intention of the company to resume work again shortly.

New Big River Mine.—This mine, like all others in the district, has suffered from shortage of labour. The amount of quartz crushed showed a big decrease on the figures of 1919, being only 2,970 tons, as compared with 4,254 tons. Despite, however, the smallness of the tonnage crushed, the total value received for gold during the year was in excess of that received in 1919. This was due partly to the fact that the average grade of quartz treated was about 2 dwt. higher per ton, and partly to the receipt of premium on the gold disposed of. The development during the year was practically limited to the sinking of several winzes below the bottom (No. 11) level. This development served to show that the reef continued down below that level, of satisfactory size and value.

New Keep-it-Dark Mine.—About fourteen men on an average were employed throughout the year, but most of the work done was in the nature of repairs or of making new air-connections. A new block of ore was located in No. 8 level south, and driven on for about 100 ft., and a trial crushing of 263 tons put through, but this only yielded a total of 29 oz. 8 dwt. gold, which was far from being a payable return. The mine ceased operations in October, but the water is being kept down, and it is expected that a further attempt will be made to carry out some prospecting below No. 9 level.

North Big River Mine.—Three of the adit levels opened up a few years ago were put in repair, and in Nos. 1 and 3 some further driving was done on reef-tracks. The result, however, could not be described as satisfactory, for, although a little quartz was got in places, it was very limited, and the values contained in it were not, as far as I can learn, of a payable nature. Another adit, which may be called No. 4, was driven on a second reef to the westward of the reef on which the other tunnels referred to were driven. This adit was carried in about 100 ft., but was only at a shallow depth below the surface. A large reef-formation was shown in it, but I believe the values were very low.

South Big River.—Owing to inability to get labour no work was done on this property.

Wealth of Nations and Energetic Mines.—The work of replacing the surface plant destroyed by fire in 1918 was completed, but beyond a certain amount of repairs to levels and the opening-up and repairing of the main air-courses little underground work was done.

Progress Mine.—An average of forty-three men was employed, but in the latter half of the year, owing to the complete deletion of the few remaining stopes, active breaking and crushing operations ceased. During the period the mine was in active work some 8,102 tons of quartz were mined, and treated for a return of gold valued at £13,668 18s. 6d. An effort is now being made to raise further funds for the purpose of prospecting for the reef beyond the fault, which has cut out all the known quartz-bodies.

Ready Bullion Mine.—At this mine, which was formerly known as the New Ulster, the deep-level adit was continued, the face being advanced to 350 ft.

New Discovery Mine.—A low-level adit to intersect the reef about 200 ft. below the previous workings was started, and driven a distance of 340 ft.

New Millerton Mine.—Work was resumed by the new company, and a good deal of development carried out underground, particularly on No. 3 level, which was extended 187 ft. north and 335 ft. south. A considerable amount of this driving was on reef which, although rather small and broken, is said to contain very fair gold values. An average of eleven men was employed.