

HOKITIKA AND ROSS.

Mount Greenland Mine.—Very little breaking or crushing was done during the year, 140 tons only of quartz being mined, which yielded 24 oz. 4 dwt. of gold. Some prospecting was carried out in the William Tell low level with a view to locating the reef beyond the fault which cuts it off in the north end of the workings, but without success. A good deal of surface prospecting was also carried out for the purpose of tracing the reef farther to the south.

Mount Greenland Extended.—Two men were employed extending the prospecting crosscut, which was carried in to about 500 ft. Some stringers of quartz were met with, but the result of the work was not satisfactory.

STILLWATER.

Victory Mine.—A start has been made here to intersect the old Victory reef (worked years ago by Curtis Bros.) by means of a new adit which is about 60 ft. lower than the previous workings. Up to the end of the year this had been pushed in about 260 ft., and it is expected to cut the reef at about 450 ft. A little prospecting was also done in the neighbourhood of the antimony lode.

General Remarks on Quartz-mining.

A number of things combined to injuriously affect the quartz-mining industry in the district during the period under review. There has been a pronounced shortage of labour, which has kept progress back in all the working-mines. The high cost of mining-materials has also helped in this regard. Most of the new mining companies formed during the previous year to develop reefing properties have carried out a certain amount of work, but all of them have experienced great difficulty in getting parties of competent miners together. Some of the older mines in which the supply of quartz had been depleted had to close down. Notable among these was the Progress Mine, which, since being taken up by an English company in 1895, has produced gold to the total value of £1,463,770, and paid in dividends £326,562. During the year the last of the known blocks of ore was worked out, and mining operations had to cease. It is well known that the reef in this mine has been seriously affected by a strong fault, beyond which it has not been traced. It is to be hoped that it will be possible for the company to undertake further prospecting in the effort to locate this reef beyond the fault. Others of the old mines, in which the values have fallen too low to pay for working under present circumstances, have also had to close down. Amongst these are the New Keep-it-Dark and Murray Creek Mines.

Inspection of all mines has been systematically carried out, and it has been found that the provisions of the Mining Act have been well observed.

I am pleased to have to report that throughout the year there have been no fatal accidents, nor, indeed, accidents of any kind of a serious nature.

Proceedings were taken during the year against one mine-manager for a breach of section 254 (11) of the Mining Act. A conviction was recorded, and a fine of £5 inflicted.

An inquiry before the Warden and two assessors was also held under the provisions of section 266 of the principal Act, as amended by section 17 (4) of the Mining Amendment Act of 1914, concerning the death of L. Humphreys in the Dominion Consolidated Development Company's mine at Wakamarina, which occurred late in 1919. As a result the certificate of the mine-manager, James Carroll, was suspended for four months.

A considerable number of applications was made by companies and small parties of miners for assistance to prospect, a number of which was granted, but no discoveries of any great value have been reported.

Dredging.

This industry has been extremely quiet during the year. The Chambers Reward dredge was the only one in commission, and this only worked for a few months in the early part of the year, recovering 560 oz. 17 dwt. 16 gr. of gold, valued at £3,310. The values in the ground worked were found to be very patchy, and the recovery was too small to be payable, consequently dredging operations had to cease.

The Rimu Dredging Company, formed to work the extensive alluvial flats west of Rimu Township, has been busy with the construction of a large modern dredge. A pontoon is nearing completion, and a large amount of machinery has arrived on the ground from America, but it will be a good while yet before active operations can be started.

Alluvial Mining.

In this branch of the mining industry a further falling-off has been noticeable during the year. Some 144 men have been employed, as compared with 161 in 1919. The total production of gold amounted to 4,045 oz., valued at £18,336. The following notes refer to the principal localities in which work was carried out:—

Howard Diggings.—Returns showed that sixteen men were employed on the various claims, 297 oz. of gold being won, valued at £1,229. Conlon's claim was the largest producer, with 154 oz., valued at £654.

Murchison.—The largest production was from Thornton and Scholefield's claim, at Upper Matakaitaki, which yielded 80 oz., valued at £331.

Addison's Flat.—The Addison's Flat Company ceased operations, but I understand the claims have been taken over by another party. The total production for the year from this locality amounted to 508 oz., valued at £2,064 (Addison's Flat Sluicing Company, 138 oz., valued at £506; and Mouat and party, 369 oz., valued at £1,558).

Charleston.—The total production amounted to 280 oz., of which 241 oz., valued at £1,013, came from Powell's claim.