

GOLD AND SILVER MINING.

The following statement shows the quantity and value of bullion-production, the dividends paid by registered companies, and the number of productive claims and gold-dredges during 1922 and 1921 :—

| Class of Gold-mining. | Production of Bullion. | | | | Dividends paid by Registered Companies. | | Number of Productive Claims and Dredges. | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---|--------|--|-------|
| | 1922. | | 1921. | | 1922. | 1921. | 1922. | 1921. |
| | Oz. | £ | Oz. | £ | £ | £ | | |
| Quartz .. | 488,202 | 439,489 | 527,855 | 433,488 | 51,991 | 53,791 | 20 | 23 |
| Alluvial .. | 16,620 | 68,260 | 16,718 | 77,438 | 1,040 | 2,337 | 149 | 150 |
| Dredging .. | 15,465 | 67,239 | 7,302 | 36,179 | .. | 600 | 11 | 11 |
| Totals .. | 520,287 | 574,988 | 551,875 | 547,105 | 53,031 | 56,728 | 180 | 184 |

The bullion produced during the year from the quartz-mines in the Dominion was less in quantity by 39,653 oz. than that produced in 1921, though the value increased by £6,001. The yield from alluvial mining was less in quantity by 98 oz., and in value by £9,178. The production of gold by dredging increased markedly, the quantity of gold obtained being more than double that of the previous year, while the value shows an increase of approximately 86 per cent. This satisfactory increase is largely attributable to the successful operations of the Rimu Flat Dredge at Rimu, near Hokitika. The results there obtained by the use of a modern dredge give promise of leading to a very great extension of gold-dredging in Westland and elsewhere.

MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD AND SILVER.

As stated in my report for last year, the Onakaka Iron and Steel Company obtained very satisfactory results from a trial run of the blast furnace. Operations this year have been confined to the erection of a wharf to serve the works, and it is expected in the near future to reach the production stage.

The scheelite deposits were not worked during the year on account of the unprofitable price ruling.

Development and prospecting operations were continued on the Cinnabar lodes during the year. At Mount Mitchell claim a Navak type of furnace was erected, and a plant for treating ore was constructed at the Rising Sun Mine, Puhipuhi.

The search for petroleum was continued at Kotuku, near Greymouth, but without success up to the present. The Taranaki Oil Wells (Limited) produced 5,190 gallons of crude oil, and the Blenheim Oil Company 3,500 gallons.

COAL-MINING.

The output of several classes of coal mined in each inspection district is summarized as follows :—

| Class of Coal. | Output of Coal during 1922. | | | | Total Output to the End of 1922. |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| | Northern District (North Island). | West Coast District (South Island). | Southern District (South Island). | Total. | |
| | Tons. | Tons. | Tons. | Tons. | Tons. |
| Bituminous and semi-bituminous | 89,575 | 878,863 | ... | 968,438 | 34,917,970 |
| Brown | 430,578 | 480 | 279,275 | 710,333 | 17,290,650 |
| Lignite | ... | 640 | 178,408 | 179,048 | 3,342,687 |
| Totals for 1922 ... | 520,153 | 879,983 | 457,683 | 1,857,819 | 55,551,307 |
| Totals for 1921 ... | 514,607 | 810,875 | 483,613 | 1,809,095 | 53,693,488 |