

PETROLEUM.

Drilling for oil in the West Coast Inspection District was conducted by the Kotuku Petroleum Prospecting Syndicate on its area at Kotuku, two holes being put down to 941 ft. and 612 ft. respectively, but both with negative results.

In the Northern Inspection District 5,190 gallons of crude oil were produced for the year by the Taranaki Oil Wells Limited, and 3,500 gallons by the Blenheim Oil Company. No new drilling was done during the year.

VI. STONE-QUARRY INSPECTION AND STATISTICS.

By section 2 of the Stone-quarries Amendment Act, 1920, the application of the Act was extended to include every place, not being a mine, in which persons work in quarrying stone and any part of which has a face more than 15 ft. deep, and also in any tunnel in the construction of which explosives are used. The Act, however, does not apply to any Government operations, or any road or railway-cutting, or excavations for buildings.

The following is a table showing the number of quarries under the Stone-quarries Acts, also the number of persons ordinarily employed thereat, and the annual output and value of crude stone during 1922 :—

Provincial District.	Name and Address of Government Inspector of Stone-quarries.	Number of Working Quarries under the Act.	Number of Persons ordinarily employed.	Output of Stone.							
				Stone or Gravel for Macadamizing or Ballast.	Stone for Harbour-works.	Building or Monumental-stone.	Limestone for Agriculture.	Limestone for Cement or Mortar.	Phosphate for Agriculture.	Miscellaneous.	Value at Quarry.
Auckland ..	James Newton, Mines Dept., Auckland	79	534	Tons. 260,516	Tons. 170,190	Tons. 42,500	Tons. 22,733	Tons. 175,147	Tons. ..	Tons. ..	£ 137,261
	M. Paul, Mines Dept., Waihi (Hauraki Mining District only)	12	87	59,104	..	51	..	..	..	..	16,209
Hawke's Bay	James Newton, Mines Dept., Auckland	13	68	8,079	55,157	200	6,000	..	..	..	5,699
Taranaki ..	Ditto	12	68	12,255	31,513	..	..	..	..	..	6,993
Wellington ..	„	33	177	71,059	20,920	..	6,283	..	..	..	37,299
Canterbury ..	„	13	97	87,511	4,079	3,064	4,540	..	..	..	29,892
Nelson }	J. F. Downey, Mines Dept., Reefton	18	55	6,391	..	913	1,906	35	..	220	6,486
Westland }	A. Whitley, Mines Dept., Dunedin										
Otago }											
Southland }		32	297	75,792	13,232	13,964	46,625	35,002	3,128	..	78,254
Totals 1922	.. ..	212	1,383	580,707	265,091	60,692	88,087	210,184	3,128	220	318,093
Totals 1921	.. ..	257	1,561	667,239	198,660	11,632	123,796	180,751	6,012	2,190	358,362

QUARRY ACCIDENTS.

The following is a summary of serious accidents during 1922 at quarries under the Stone-quarries Act :—

Cause.	Number of Accidents.		Number of Sufferers.	
	Fatal.	Serious.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.
Explosives	2	1	2	2
Falls of ground .. ..	..	2	..	2
Falling from face or during ascent or descent.. ..	..	..	..	..
Totals	2	3	2	4

Of the fatal accidents one took place on the 5th May at the Parauui Quarry, Whareora, and by it one man, A. H. G. Husheer, lost his life, and another man, Clarence Akast, was seriously injured. The cause of the accident was a premature explosion of gelignite. The fatality led to prosecution of the person in charge of the quarry, who was convicted and fined. The second fatal accident was to A. A. McDonald, at the Timaru Borough quarry, on the 20th October, the injured person succumbing to his injuries on the 30th. The deceased had dropped some loose blasting-powder down a borehole in order to free the pump, which had jammed in the hole, and to light the gunpowder he dropped in a small piece of gelignite with a short fuse attached. The gelignite or attached fuse lit the gunpowder prematurely when his head and face were directly over the borehole.

Accounts of the serious but non-fatal accidents are given in the District Inspectors' reports.

VII. STATE AID TO MINING.

(1.) SUBSIDIZED PROSPECTING.

Upon subsidized prospecting operations ninety-nine persons were intermittently employed during the year.

The following is a statement showing the results of prospecting operations as reported by the Inspectors of Mines.