

(3.) ALLUVIAL MINING.

The following is a statement showing the value of production and dividends declared from alluvial gold-mines during 1925 :—

Name of Company.	Estimated Value of Gold produced.	Dividends declared.	
		During 1925.	Total to End of 1925.
Scandinavian Water-race Company	£ 1,624	£ ..	£ ..
Gabriel's Gully Sluicing Company	2,229	..	17,615
Lawrence Sluicing Company	1,648	..	2,000
W. R. Smyth	1,339	..	..
Golden Crescent Sluicing Company	1,632	787	13,649
Sailor's Gully Sluicing Company	1,931	..	7,520
Graham and Party	1,883	1,163	4,063
Nokomai Hydraulic Sluicing Company	2,547	..	54,684
Round Hill Mining Company	4,034	..	..
Hobonu Gold Sluicing Company	1,839	..	..
Stubbs and Steel	1,193	..	..
G. M. Powell and Sons	1,045	..	..
All other claims	22,146	..	..
Totals	44,990	1,950	Unknown.

V. MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

IRON.

Smelting was resumed at the Onakaka Iron and Steel Company's furnace at Onakaka in September and continued without interruption till the end of the year, during which period 2,579 tons of iron-ore were smelted and 1,290 tons of pig iron produced. The pig iron was of fair quality, and the analyses of three samples shows its average composition to be as follows: Graphite carbon, 3.02; combined carbon, 0.48; silicon, 2.11; sulphur, 0.07; phosphorus, 0.32; manganese, 0.76; and iron (by difference), 93.24 per cent. The number of coke-ovens was increased and the method of storing coal improved. The company is having difficulty in marketing its product in open competition with low-priced pig iron imported from India.

SULPHUR.

Another attempt is being made to work the White Island sulphur deposits, this time by the White Island Agricultural Chemical Company (Limited). Operations were commenced late in the year and comprised the testing and preparing for opencast working of the sulphur deposit, the provision of a safe anchorage and loading-facilities for small craft at Crater Bay, and the building of accommodation for the men employed on the island. A small quantity of high-grade sulphur was shipped to Auckland and liquefied out at 99.8 per cent. pure. It is at present proposed to work the crude sulphur and market it as a fertilizer. In this connection the company has acquired a site on Tauranga Harbour, and is constructing a wharf and erecting a crushing and bagging plant.

White Island also contains several guano deposits, but no reliable estimate has yet been made of the quantity and quality available. Wireless communication is maintained between the island and the mainland.

PETROLEUM.

An Australian Company, the Taranaki Oilfields (Limited), was formed in 1924 to further test the Taranaki Oilfield. Drilling operations were commenced at the beginning of 1925, and two wells were started, one at Tarata and another on the foreshore at Moturoa. By the end of the year the Tarata Well was down 4,130 ft., without, however, meeting more than traces of oil. The Moturoa Well got a good show of oil at 930 ft. At 1,550 ft. gas at high pressure was struck, but the analyses of the gas showed that it contained 72 per cent. of carbon dioxide and only about 25 per cent. of methane and its homologues, so that the gas was valueless as a fuel. From the records of other wells in the vicinity it was expected to strike an oil-sand at about 2,200 ft., but this anticipation was, unfortunately, not realized. Good shows of oil were got between 2,150 ft. and 2,600 ft., but nothing to indicate the presence of oil in commercial quantities. By the end of the year the Moturoa Well had reached a depth of 3,192 ft. Detailed field-work by expert oil geologists was carried on continuously in other parts of the Taranaki field with a view to discovering areas whose structure is favourable for the retention of oil.

A great deal of field-work was done during the year in the Gisborne district and several favourable structures located. It is proposed to start drilling at an early date.

A number of oil-seepages occur near the Mangles River in the Murchison district, and a company has been formed to drill this area. Plant has been procured, and drilling will be commenced early in 1926.