

DREDGING.

Molyneux Electric Gold-dredging Co., Alexandra.—Dredging was carried on during the months of July and August when the Molyneux River was low. The gold won during the short working-period amounted to 298 oz. 9 dwt., valued at £1,152 12s. 9d.

Nevis Crossing Dredge, Nevis River.—The pontoons and machinery were repaired, and dredging was resumed in October. The ground, which varies from 8 ft. to 12 ft. in depth, has been previously worked by hand. The gold won amounted to 367 oz., valued at £1,413. Dividends amounting to £200 were paid.

Upper Nevis Gold-dredging Co., Nevis River.—The reconstruction of the Earnsclough No. 3 dredge was completed at the end of the year. Some alterations were made to suit the different dredging-conditions. A sluice-box was installed instead of the tailings-elevator, the bucket ladder was lengthened for dredging to a depth of 60 ft., and the pontoons were made larger. The pontoons are built of jarrah and ironbark; they are 138 ft. long, 35 ft. wide at the bow, and 25 ft. at the stern. The ladder is 105 ft. between centres, and is equipped with fifty-seven buckets of 7 cubic feet capacity, which discharge at the rate of ten per minute into a sluice-box 96 ft. long by 6 ft. wide, lined with ripples and perforated plates for saving the gold. Electric power for working the dredge is generated by water from the company's race. A 100 h.p. motor is installed for driving the buckets; one, of 30 h.p., for the winches; and two, of 50 h.p. and 25 h.p., for the pumps. The dredge will commence work in an elevator-paddock where good returns were obtained by S. C. Fache, the former owner of the claim.

Shotover Gold-dredging Co., Maori Point.—The suction cutter dredge which was erected on the company's claim proved quite unsuitable for working the rough stony ground in the Shotover River, and ceased operations in the early part of the year.

The Undaunted Dredging and Mining Co., Naseby.—This company was formed to work a special dredging claim of 200 acres near Naseby. The dredge on the Kyeburn which was formerly owned and worked by the Otakau Gold-dredging Co. is being removed and reconstructed for working the claim. A Pelton wheel, driven by water from the company's race from Deep Creek, will be used for working the dredge.

MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

Tungsten.—The Glenorchy Scheelite Co. produced 4 tons 5 cwt. scheelite, valued at £289.

Platinum.—33 oz. of platinum concentrates, valued at £231, were recovered from alluvial and sea-beach claims at Orepuki and Wakapatu.

ACCIDENTS.

No serious accidents occurred at metal-mines or dredges in the Southern Inspection District during the year.

ANNEXURE B.

STONE-QUARRIES.

SUMMARY OF REPORT BY INSPECTOR OF QUARRIES FOR THE NORTH ISLAND.

(MR. JAMES NEWTON).

During the year as much time as has been available has been spent in actual inspection, and I have to record that, taking a reasonable view of the operations, I have found generally the operators have exercised due care with regard to providing safe working-conditions. During the year a good deal of tunnelling in connection with drainage, &c., has been done in and around Auckland City, the tunnels varying from a few feet in length to several thousands of feet. In all the lengthy tunnels the owners and contractors have provided mechanical means in order to ensure a healthy supply of air, usually in the shape of centrifugal fans, electrically driven. Some have preferred the pressure and some the exhaust system. The leading men have invariably been those who have had a lengthy experience in coal or stone mining. I have, on inspection, found the drives to be adequately ventilated and well supported whenever support was required. The quantity of stone won, including all kinds, for the year under review has been 1,501,715 tons, which shows an increase of 341,356 tons over last year's production, whilst the increase in value has been £74,429. The number of quarries operated shows a decrease of 3, whilst the number of persons employed has increased by 115.

The year's operations, I regret to say, have not been free from accidents, one fatal and four serious accidents having taken place. On the 2nd March G. Jones, a workman employed in the Cook County's Patutaha quarry, had a small bone in his foot broken as the result of being struck by a falling stone. Jones was loading a truck on the floor of the quarry from a heap of loose material about 6 ft. high, when one of the stones from the heap rolled down, striking him. Jones at the time did not think that he was seriously injured, and continued in his work; but, the injury becoming painful, he knocked off and consulted a doctor. On examination it was found that a small bone was broken.

On the 1st July, in the same quarry, a workman by the name of V. W. Linski sustained a broken leg as the result of having been struck by a rolling stone. Linski was engaged removing the loose overburden from the top of the quarry, in which was embedded a boulder, and was loosening the boulder with his pick, when it rolled forward and, striking him on the leg, inflicted the injury mentioned.

On the 6th July a workman employed at the Te Kawa quarry received injuries to his head as the result of being hit by the fastenings of a belt. Malcolm Melvor, the injured man, was in the act of turning the crusher over the centre, when he came in contact with the belt, which was running round on a loose pulley on the crusher-shaft.

On the 18th October a very distressing accident happened in a small tunnel that was being driven by the Mount Albert Borough for sewerage purposes, whereby G. McMahon lost his life and A. Watts lost an eye, the result of boring into unexploded gelignite. It was known that explosives had been lost down a crevice when charging previous holes, and McMahon had been warned of this. When boring out the face two days later, he struck the lost plugs, with fatal results.

I may mention that in the intervals between actual inspection of the scattered quarries my time has been busily occupied with clerical work, mostly in connection with correspondence and examinations of applicants for quarry-managers' permits. The examinations are conducted on a practical basis, very little theoretical matter being introduced, and, provided the applicant has got a knowledge of the Act and regulations and has had the necessary experience, I find that most aspirants are able to pass.

In conclusion, I wish again to mention that I have received very great help from the officers of the various public bodies in the matter of reaching the operating quarries in the remote country districts. They have motored me long distances in order to facilitate inspection, very often at considerable inconvenience to themselves.