

The Rimu dredge during the period under review handled 2,065,567 cubic yards of gravel and recovered gold to the value of £46,970, an increase of 184,720 yards dug, but a decrease of £10,755 in return when compared with the figures for the previous year. The dredge worked for 85·9 per cent. of the possible dredging-time, and the average depth of the ground dredged was just over 38 ft. The average value of the gravel treated was 5·46d. per cubic yard, compared with 7·37d. per cubic yard during 1928. The company owning this dredge has done a great deal of prospecting work, their Keystone drill having been in constant operation throughout the year. The dredge pontoons and superstructure are of timber; the work of replacing these in steel has been put in hand. Considerable improvements are also to be made in the dredge machinery, and the dredge when reconstructed will have a larger capacity and be able to dig deeper than at present.

The New River dredge was reconstructed and was put into operation in March. It was, however, unable to pay expenses, and was closed down in July, after which the company owning the dredge went into liquidation.

(3) ALLUVIAL MINING.

The following is a statement showing the value of production and dividends declared from alluvial gold-mines during 1929 :—

Name of Company.	Estimated Value of Gold produced.	Dividends declared.	
		During 1929.	Total to End of 1929.
	£	£	£
Kildare Gold-mining Co.	1,230	..	..
A. and G. Brown	1,010	..	..
Gabriel's Gully Sluicing Co.	1,277	..	20,215
W. R. Smyth	1,422	..	..
Sailor's Gully Sluicing Co.	1,369	..	9,410
Graham and party	949	370	4,833
Big Beach Gold-mining Co.	3,035	..	..
Moonlight Mining Syndicate	1,038	120	120
Nokomai Sluicing Co.	3,770	..	..
Round Hill Mining Co.	1,163	..	..
Mahakipawa Goldfields	1,515	..	..
Hohonu Sluicing Co.	1,196	..	..
Stubbs and Steel	841	..	..
All other claims	18,007	..	..
Totals	37,822	490	Unknown.

V. MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

IRON.

The ironworks at Onakaka were shut down during the first half of the year. A pipemaking plant, a hydro-electric plant, and a new aerial tramway between the iron-ore quarry and the furnace were installed. In the second half of the year 8,043 tons of ore were smelted and produced 4,393 tons of pig iron.

SULPHUR.

From the sulphur deposits on White Island 3,169 tons of crude sulphur were mined for use in the manufacture of fertilizer.

QUICKSILVER.

In 1928 an area of about 600 acres near Ngawha Springs, North Auckland, was taken up and prospected for quicksilver on behalf of the Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., of London. Numerous boreholes were put down with satisfactory results. During the past year a large amount of development work has been done on the property, and a reduction plant is now being installed.

PETROLEUM.

The Taranaki Oilfields, Ltd., continued drilling the Gisborne No. 2 well and reached a depth of 3,180 ft. in material which caved badly; at this depth the drilling was suspended pending the installation of a rotary drill. The same company put down two test bores on a supposed favourable structure near Kotuku; the first of these holes reached a depth of 420 ft. and the second a depth of 965 ft., both being stopped by reason of the soft caving strata encountered in the holes.

The Blenheim Oil-well Reclamation Co. continued without success its efforts to reclaim the No. 1 well and bring it into steady production. This well was abandoned in March, and attention turned to No. 2 well, which at the end of the year had been put in good order to a depth of over 1,600 ft.

The New Zealand Oil Syndicate, operating at Whangamomona, continued drilling in its No. 1 well to a depth of 931 ft., at which point the well was abandoned, nothing beyond a slight showing of gas or oil having been got. Near this well a second well is being drilled with better machinery, and at the end of the year it was down to a depth of 1,230 ft. without getting anything more than slight traces of oil.