

1931.

NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT,

BY THE HON. A. J. MURDOCH, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

I have the honour to present to Parliament the annual statement on the mining industry of the Dominion for the year ended 31st December, 1930.

GOLD-MINING.

During the latter portion of the year very widespread and renewed interest was taken in prospecting for gold and other minerals. Many applicants who applied to be granted assistance had formerly been following mining as an occupation, but later obtained work in the cities and towns. Owing, however, to the difficulty in finding work in the cities, many of these men have taken a renewed interest in prospecting and mining. Quite a number of them have without any assistance from the Department been engaged in prospecting for gold in many parts of the Dominion with varying success. A record number of subsidies was granted by me, but it is too early yet to be able to make a pronouncement as to the results obtained from the work carried out. It is also pleasing to record the fact that the number of persons or companies producing gold in the year 1930 was almost 20 per cent. greater than during the preceding year. So far as the money at my command would permit, any applicant, whose application when investigated showed any merit at all, was granted some measure of assistance.

From official reports received by me and from other data it would appear that the general consensus of opinion of a mining revival taking place in New Zealand is stronger to-day than that prevailing for many years past, and sooner or later it will be found that a number of low-grade mining areas in several parts of the Dominion will be worked on a very large and comprehensive scale, and with satisfactory results financially.

The quantity of gold and silver produced during the year 1930 was greater than for several years past, but, owing to the drop in the selling-price of silver, there has not been a proportionate increase in the value.

PROSPECTING FOR OIL.

During the year seven companies were engaged in boring for oil in several parts of the Dominion, and the aggregate footage bored by them amounted to 8,641 ft. Several of the wells produced spasmodically 9,400 gallons of oil. Boring operations are still being continued, and it is hoped that as the result commercial oil-wells will eventuate, which would be of great value to the Dominion.