

Boswell Gold-mining Co., Waikoromiko.—The area held by this company was that formerly held by the Four-in-Hand Gold-mining Co. A new level was driven for 100 ft. in the north side of the spur, with a view to locating a small gold-bearing leader believed to have been exposed near No. 2 level during stope-filling operations. This leader was not intersected, but probably the drive was not carried far enough. Prior to carrying out this work, a small patch of rich quartz was located on No. 2 level, from which 25½ tons yielded on treatment 149 oz. 3 dwt. gold, valued at £592 6s. 8d. Two men were employed.

Mount Tokatea Mineral Fertilizer Co.—This company did little active work on its property during a good portion of the year. Some prospecting was done on the footwall of the big Tokatea Reef, which served to reveal a small leader carrying fair gold in places. Towards the end of the year a small air-compressing plant, driven by a Gardner crude-oil engine, was installed, and the work of advancing the main crosscut in the Tokatea Reef was resumed. The reef at this point is supposed to be about 150 ft. in width. By the end of the year this crosscut had been advanced a further 18 ft. to 66 ft.

Eclipse Mine, Mahakirau (J. and R. McKenzie, Owners).—The adit mentioned in last year's report as being in course of driving with a view to the location of a small leader which carried little gold near the surface was continued for a few feet, but nothing of value was got in it. The owners then repaired an old adit, several hundred feet farther along the line of the leader, and extended this for a considerable distance, but no better result attended the work than had attended their previous efforts.

Huia Mine.—This claim, formerly part of the Peter Maxwell, was worked by Gibbs and party. A parcel of 6 tons from No. 1 adit, treated at Thames School of Mines, yielded 7 oz. 11 dwt. bullion, valued at £20 7s. 8d.

QUICKSILVER MINES.

Kaikohe Development, Ltd., Ngawha Springs (R. H. Goodwin, Manager).—This company continued operations and made a great effort to overcome the difficulties that lay in the way of recovering the mercury from the surface deposit it was working, but the recovery continued very unsatisfactory, and when about September a substantial fall came in the price of mercury, it was found impossible to carry on operations, and all active work was stopped. A few hands were kept on, however, to make a general clean-up of the plant, which was not completed till nearly the end of the year. During the period 7,924 tons of material was treated, for a yield of 15 tons 5 cwt. 1 qr. 12 lb. mercury, valued at £7,296, making the total value of the product recovered since the company started operations £8,326. An average of fifty-three men was employed.

Great British Mercury Mine (T. A. Black, Manager).—The new low level was extended about 150 ft., and No. 3 borehole was located. No cinnabar-bearing formation was, however, met with.

Mount Mitchell Mine.—The only work done was a little quarrying on the roadside.

SULPHUR.

There was no resumption of work during the year by White Island Products, Ltd., and no other sulphur deposits in the district were worked.

OIL-WELLS.

Taranaki Oil Fields, (N.Z.), N.L.—Drilling of Waitangi No. 1 well was continued, the well being carried down from 373 ft. to 1,682 ft. Down to 900 ft. the drilling was in fairly hard and solid rock, but below this depth the ground became much softer, with a tendency to close in after being drilled. Much of this part of the well had to be reamed again and again, and when at 1,350 ft. the well closed in entirely it was realized that further effort to deepen it would be wasted. The well was therefore abandoned, and the rig was shifted to a new location about one mile north of it. Here a new well, known as Waitangi No. 2 was started. This well was drilled to 2,172 ft. Down to 1,700 ft. the drilling was carried out without undue trouble, but at that depth the lowest section of the 11½ in. casing became displaced, and could not be withdrawn. It then became necessary to mill through this casing, which work was satisfactorily accomplished, and drilling proceeded. At 1,931 ft., the 8½ in. casing was set, but from this point on much trouble was experienced. It was found increasingly difficult to maintain the full diameter of the hole, and below 1,960 ft. the closing-in was so persistent as to render this impossible. Every effort was made to carry on, but no progress could be made, and eventually the well had to be abandoned, when the company entirely gave up its operations.

Moturoa Oil Fields Ltd.—The drilling of Moturoa No. 2 well was started in March, and proceeded with few interruptions till July, when the 8½ in. casing was cemented at 2,045 ft., an effective shut-off being made. Drilling was then continued to 2,127 ft. Between 2,090 ft. and the bottom a good flow of oil was met with. Up to the end of the year, the well had produced 71,568 gallons of crude oil, valued at £1,192 16s. In November a fire caused considerable damage to the rig and derrick, resulting in a shut-down for some weeks. The average daily production since the well came in is estimated at about twenty-five barrels of 35 Imperial gallons each. Eight men were employed.

New Plymouth (N.Z.) Oil-wells, Ltd.—This company continued the drilling of its No. 1 well from 280 ft. to 3,036 ft. Petroliferous gas was struck at various depths, and at various points below 2,600 ft. there were light traces of oil. In November operations were suspended pending the raising of further finance.

Coal-oil (N.Z.), Ltd.—In the Omata No. 1 well, the side-tracking operations at about 2,525 ft., referred to in last year's report, were continued and the well was advanced a short distance, but another set of tools got fast, and further side-tracking had to be resorted to. This time, with a good deal of trouble, the well was eventually deepened to 3,505 ft. Light shows of oil were got at 3,424 ft. and at 3,438 ft. In July, owing to the exhaustion of its funds the company ceased operations.

New Zealand Oil Syndicate.—In the early part of the year the Prospect Valley No. 2 well was deepened from 1,340 ft. to 1,396 ft. The chairman of the syndicate, Mr. Ewen McGregor, made further efforts during various parts of the year to continue the work, but no further advance was made.

Blenheim Oil-well Reclamation Co., Ltd.—Side-tracking of the lost tools at 2,044 ft. in the Blenheim No. 2 well was effected, and the well was subsequently deepened, after much delay and a lot of trouble, to 2,200 ft. Between 2,170 ft. and 2,177 ft. the oil strata was penetrated. Towards the end of April a strong flow of oil occurred, and for some time afterwards a good deal of oil came to the surface, largely as the result of frequent swabbing. About the end of May swabbing was discontinued, and an attempt made to pump the oil. At first the pumping worked successfully, but formations settled back into the bottom of the well preventing the oil rising quickly enough to keep the pump going. About 40,000 gallons of oil was produced for the year.

ACCIDENTS.

It is pleasing to be able to record again that during the year no fatal accidents have occurred at any of the mines or quarries in the district, and that there were even no accidents reported as serious.