

value of the plant must also be taken into consideration, but as this cannot be ascertained the average value of gold for each man employed must be adopted.

The total number of men employed last year was 11,412, as against 11,553 for the former year—a decrease of 141. The decrease was principally in the Westland District, where the number was 613 less than for the previous year. In Otago, also, there was a decrease of 59. In all other districts there has been an increase in the number employed, especially in the Auckland District, where 461 more men were employed than for the previous year. If we divide the value of the gold entered for exportation by the number of men employed in connection with the gold-workings last year we get an average of £77 18s. 11d., as against £83 19s. 7d. for the previous year—a decrease of £6 0s. 8d. If the value of the gold in the different districts be taken, and the number of men employed in each, it will be seen there was £127 1s. obtained for each miner in the Auckland District, £30 2s. 10d. in Marlborough, £30 2s. 10d. in Nelson, £72 1s. 1d. on the West Coast, and £69 5s. 2d. in Otago. In some places, however, the miners do not depend upon gold-mining alone for their living, as they hold land under the occupation system, or have small homesteads on freehold land, and employ portions of their time in cultivation, &c.

QUARTZ-WORKINGS.

This branch of the gold-mining industry is steadily progressing, although the yield of gold from the whole of the mines last year is nearly the same as for the former year. There has been an increase in the North Island, while on the West Coast there has been a considerable decrease. During last year 116,094 tons of quartz and tailings were treated in the Auckland District, which yielded 156,698oz. bullion, representing an estimated value of £261,746, as against bullion to the value of £219,651 for the former year—an increase last year of £42,095. In Marlborough only 25 tons of quartz and tailings were treated for a yield of 14oz. gold, having a value of about £54 12s. In Nelson 3,554 tons of quartz were crushed, yielding 657oz. gold, valued at about £2,562. On the West Coast 38,370 tons of quartz and tailings were treated, which yielded 18,360oz. gold, representing an approximate value of £71,604; and in Otago 13,390 tons of quartz and tailings were treated for a return of 5,713½oz. gold, having an estimated value of £22,283. The greatest decrease in the yield of gold from quartz-workings last year was from the mines on the West Coast. It amounted to 10,193½oz. gold, having an approximate value of £42,610. The total quantity of quartz crushed and tailings treated last year was 171,433 tons, which yielded gold and bullion to the value of about £358,250, as against £359,490 for the previous year. The yield last year from the quartz-workings was equal to 40 per cent. of the total value of the gold entered for exportation.

It may be interesting to honourable members for me to state that 52 per cent. of the total value of the gold and bullion obtained in the North Island last year was extracted by the cyanide process. This is said to give about 26 per cent. more of the gold in the ore and about 17 per cent. more of the silver at the Waihi Company's works than was obtained previously by the most approved systems of amalgamation. Considerable advances have been made in the cyanide treatment since it was first introduced, and no doubt by further experiments the processes will be greatly improved in future. It, however, requires men specially trained to use the cyanide process successfully, as they must have a knowledge of the chemistry of minerals as well as understand the action of alkaline and acid substances on the ore under treatment, and the percentage of the solvent required to give the best results on the different classes of ore.

COROMANDEL.

Owing to a discovery of very rich ore in the Hauraki Company's ground, which formerly belonged to the Coromandel Company, there has been a great demand for mining properties in this locality, and considerable areas of ground have been purchased by English companies, who are providing money to develop their claims. The discovery of this rich auriferous ore was made by Ross