

MANGANESE- AND SULPHUR-MINING.

The manganese-mines in the Whangarei district and at Waiheke Island have not been worked during the year.

Messrs. John Chambers and Son, of Auckland, who are largely interested in the export of minerals, have supplied the following:—

“*Re manganese-mining*: There has been no mining in this district during the last year, the activity in the gold-mining having taken off all the men from the manganese-mining, the wages being better and probably work easier. The European markets have been low all the year, the prices ranging from 10½d. to 1s. 0½d. per metallic unit delivered at Middlesboro or Lancashire, and, as the best only goes 54 units, there is not enough in it to encourage shipping. There has been a demand lately for it from Australia for chlorination and similar purposes, but we have not been able to get any to supply. We have shipped 340 tons of sulphur to Queensland lately, and there is a demand for more from New South Wales. The sulphur was obtained from deposits at Tikitere, Rotorua district. A contract has been entered into to ship 2,000 tons to Sydney at a very low price, about £3 per ton delivered. Our shipment and this one is coming from Rotorua. The Natives would much prefer the whole deposit to be taken over by the Government and worked for them, a royalty being charged. If we could have got any secure tenure for the sulphur deposits we could have arranged for the sulphur to be refined on the ground by a company, and the trade made into an important one, but as it stands now no one can put any money into anything of the sort.”

PETROLEUM.

Over thirty years ago the first bores were sunk at Moturoa, near New Plymouth, for petroleum, and since that time efforts have been made at intervals to secure payable supplies of the valuable mineral oil, of which ample indications abound. Some three years ago a strong syndicate undertook fresh operations, and to date some 5,600 ft. have been bored in five bores, but it is considered that the bore, now 1,000 ft. in depth, at which operations are being carried on will have to be deepened at least another 1,000 ft. before strata of sufficient firmness is reached to enable the oil to be payably worked. Many difficulties have been experienced, the water and mud in the bores being great drawbacks. On one occasion the derrick and boring gear was destroyed by a fire resultant on the gas igniting at a lighted lamp some distance from the bore. The manager states that some seventy barrels of crude oil of good quality have been raised by the syndicate, and found a ready market.

COAL-MINING.

NORTH ISLAND.

The output from the mines in the Kawakawa, Hikurangi, and Ngunguru districts is maintained, the coal being used by ocean-going and coastal steamers in Auckland, and by owners of steam-engines on the goldfields and other places along the east coast of the Island.

Kawakawa Mine.—This mine is not likely to maintain an important output for more than another year unless fresh seams are opened.

Hikurangi Mines.—The Hikurangi Coal Company have a large area of coal in their land, and a seam of considerable thickness is now being worked from the incline near the railway. The West Bryan's and Phoenix Mines both have connections with the railway, and the mine-trucks can be emptied into the railway-wagons. Rolleston's Mine is also being worked, and can be connected with the railway at a moderate cost. These mines, if necessity should arise, will be in a position to double or treble their output.

Waikato Mines.—The Waikato Mine has still continued to maintain a profitable yield. The Taupiri Reserve and Taupiri Extended Mines are both working on large seams, and could considerably increase their output, but any great additional demand is not to be expected until direct railway communication is effected with the Thames and Waihi, when the coal, as well as the slack, will be in request for steam and other purposes on the Hauraki Goldfields.

Mokau Mine.—Increased attention is being directed towards opening up this mine. The bar at the mouth of the Mokau River will, however, be always an obstacle to the success of this mine, as only very small steamers can cross the bar and be taken up the river to the mine. It is therefore apparent that until railway communication with the Mokau district is effected the coal deposits cannot be worked to any great extent.

MIDDLE ISLAND, NELSON DISTRICT.

Collingwood.

Prospecting has been carried on in a new lease taken up by Messrs. Taylor and Walker, at Puponga, in the vicinity of Cape Farewell, and about sixteen miles from Collingwood. The Pakawau Mine still continues to be worked, but operations have been completely suspended in the Wallsend Mine.

Nelson.

The Enner Glyn Mine is being further opened up by a shaft sunk 160 ft. in the rock. A stone drive will be put in from this depth to cut the seam and connect with the workings from the other shaft.