

METALLIFEROUS MINES.

The attention directed to gold-mining has to a great extent diverted attention from the search for other metals. A small parcel of 21 tons of antimony exported during the year was the product of the mine situated at Endeavour Inlet, but the owners have for some time past ceased operations on account of the low price ruling in the market. Manganese working was also suspended on account of the counter-attraction of gold-mining, the 65 tons exported being the result of operations during the preceding year. The export of 17 tons of mixed minerals is also recorded. The total value of metalliferous exports amounted to £1,955.

A small quantity of stream tin was obtained at Pegasus, in Stewart Island. A party of miners report having $5\frac{1}{2}$ tons ready for shipment, but no export was made by them during the year.

No quicksilver has been yet recovered at Ohaeawai, as work has been stopped in consequence of litigation amongst the owners.

OPAL-MINING.

Opals of a valuable kind have been discovered at Tairua, in the Hauraki district, North Island. Licenses to prospect for opals have also been granted over the Mount Peel and Ackland districts, in Canterbury, where discoveries of stones were made which, in the opinion of the prospectors, warranted further development. From what can be learned the production of opals may yet become an important industry. Applications have been received for six leases, covering an area of 239 acres.

PETROLEUM.

The bore-hole at Moturoa, near New Plymouth Breakwater, was continued to a depth of 1,976 ft. before any supply of oil was reached. In consequence of the difficulty experienced in keeping the hole open and preventing the water from following the bore down outside the tubing, the oil could not be pumped out. Meanwhile the derrick by which the work was carried on was burnt down by an explosion of the gas with which the place was filled, and, after many attempts to pump out the oil, the bore was abandoned, and the machinery moved to a new site for a bore-hole about 500 yards distant. The bore at this place has reached a depth of 1,265 ft., and it is the intention of the owners to continue it to a depth of 2,000 ft.—at least, if oil in payable quantities cannot be got sooner.

The company expects to be successful so far as boring is concerned, having, as they believe, a competent and efficient staff of men, with the best description of plant, which is in excellent order. But the difficulty will be to get some strata sufficiently hard to shut off the water.

KAURI-GUM.

Notwithstanding the large quantity of kauri-gum exported every year, there was very little diminution in the amount exported last year, the quantity being 7,126 tons, as against 7,425 tons for the previous year. Although there was 299 tons less exported last year, the value exceeded that of the former year's produce by £12,557, the value of last year's produce being £431,323, which gives an average value of about £60 10s. 6d. per ton, whereas for the previous year the average value was £56 8s. per ton.

This industry affords a livelihood to a large number of both Europeans and Natives; but the average earnings of persons employed in digging gum cannot be ascertained. No doubt the time is approaching when the gum will be exhausted, but a considerable period will yet elapse before this takes place. The total quantity of kauri-gum exported since 1853 is 183,929½ tons, having a value of £8,114,852.

ROADS AND TRACKS.

The expenditure on roads and tracks has greatly increased. The activity in gold-mining demanded greater facilities to enable communication with new districts which, on account of the discovery of payable reefs, required to be made more readily accessible for prospectors and miners working their claims. I was