

PETROLEUM.

Boring operations were continued at Moturoa, near New Plymouth. No. 5 bore-hole was continued to a depth of 2,050 ft., but it was found that here it was off the oil strata, as very little oil was got, which was not by any means "payable oil," and further boring was suspended. The company are now engaged in boring at a place near Frankley Road, about four miles and a half from Moturoa and three miles from the sea-coast. The depth of 220 ft. has been attained, but boring is slow and difficult, in consequence of piercing a strata of hard boulders and coarse gravel. Mr. Oliver Samuel, who is managing director of the company, says he "hopes they will be able to bore to 1,000 ft., but unless the company's funds are strengthened their efforts must soon cease and the work be abandoned."

In the Cheviot district a prospector named Flaherty discovered traces of petroleum in February last, a sample of which was forwarded through the department to the Colonial Laboratory for test. Mr. Skey reports that the sample submitted was of first-class quality, and one distillation should be sufficient to adapt it for use in kerosene-lamps as an illuminant.

A prospector's mining lease, over 236 acres, in the Paeroa Survey District, was granted to E. A. S. Flower, for the purpose of working for petroleum, and the attention of capitalists was turned in this direction, but, owing to various circumstances, the development of the mineral-oil industry in this locality has been deferred for a time.

MANGANESE AND SULPHUR.

Mr. John Chambers, of Auckland, who for many years past has been interested in the export of those minerals, has supplied the following information: Manganese-mining has practically ceased in this district, the price in Europe being too low to warrant any one shipping. A few small lots have been shipped to Australia for chemical-works, &c., but I do not think it will reach 100 tons for the year. 2,000 tons of sulphur has been shipped to Sydney from Rotorua, but the price has been very low—about £2 5s. per ton D/D f.o.b. Auckland. This price is really below its intrinsic value. This is for 70-per-cent. ore.

OPALS.

In December last I paid a visit to the Mount Peel district, where nine leases, of a total area of 232 acres and 17 perches, have been taken up for the purpose of working for opals. Samples of the stone found there were taken for subsequent examination, when it was discovered that, although of an opaline nature, these specimens were of a different and distinct variety to the stone previously stated to have been unearthed at this place, and have no commercial value. Little capital had at that time been expended on development operations, the lease of the Record Reign Opal-mining Company being the only one on which even preparatory work had been done. It is to be feared that no importance can be attached to this discovery as an addition to the mineral wealth of the colony.

The company which was formed to work the opal deposits in the Tairua district did not carry on operations to any considerable extent, but I am informed that a party of miners intend shortly commencing to work the opals, which are of a superior quality, in this locality.

SHEELITE, WOLFRAM, AND MOLYBDENITE.

During the year several inquiries have been received from the Australian Colonies and Europe for information as to the scheelite deposits in the colony, and details of the workings of the late Otago Scheelite Company, at Lake Wakatipu, have been furnished. Messrs. Donaldson, of Golden Point, Macrae's, have worked a deposit of this mineral, for which the demand appears, however, to be very intermittent. Inquiries have also been made with reference to molybdenite, of which mineral a discovery was reported at Cobden during the early part of the year. Wolfram-ore has also been inquired for by German merchants, who were referred to the report of the Government Geologist published some years ago. It is not considered probable that the demand for the minerals above alluded to will prove sufficient to induce any extensive operations to be undertaken in their development.

COPPER DEPOSITS AT OMAUNU No. 2 BLOCK, WHANGAROA COUNTY.

A report has been forwarded to the Hon. the Minister of Mines by Mr. Alexander McKay, F.G.S., Government Geologist, on the deposits of copper at Omaunu No. 2 Block, Kaeo Survey District, Whangaroa County. He states that at the point where copper-ore was first discovered in the bed of the creek some endeavour has been made to ascertain the size and direction of the reef, and the character of the rocks with which it is associated. A shaft was sunk on the east bank of the creek close to the outcrop of the lode as seen in the bed of the creek, but this was beyond the outcrop, and, the dip of the lode being north, the rocks on the foot-wall side of the lode were cut into, and no ore of any kind was met with in a depth of 30 ft. From the bottom of the shaft a drive was made in a north-west direction till the line of creek-channel was driven across at a point where ore showed vertically over the drive; but, the drive being nearly in the direction or strike of the