

Kanieri Dredge (Gold-mines of New Zealand, Ltd.), Kanieri.—An area of 36.59 acres was dredged in 5,726 hours, which working period was 78.23 per cent. of the possible time available. The ground averaged 36.5 ft. in depth and the yardage treated was 2,147,000 cubic yards. Dredging-conditions on the license improved considerably during the year.

Arahura Dredge (Gold-mines of New Zealand, Ltd.), Arahura.—Digging to a depth of 72.5 ft., this dredge worked 24.45 acres in 6,169 hours, equivalent to 84.29 per cent of possible working-time. The quantity of ground dredged and treated amounted to 2,862,000 cubic yards.

Okarito Dredge, Five-mile Beach, Okarito.—This dredge operated for 3,808 hours during the year and dug 142,352 cubic yards. Most of the ground worked was below payable point, and the south end of the claim became very rough and beyond the power of the dredge to handle. Operations were suspended in December, and are not likely to be resumed on account of the low values that have been proved on the lagoon side of the dredged area.

Gillespie's Beach Dredge, Weheku.—This dredge, on account of shortage of labour and difficulty in securing replacements, had a low yardage and subsequent smaller gold returns than for the previous year. It was anticipated that the dredge would in the near future reach the original profitable lead temporarily abandoned some three years ago.

ALLUVIAL MINING

Buller County

Addison's Flat Gold-mining Co., Ltd., Addison's Flat.—During the year this company treated 6 acres containing 100,000 cubic yards, this quantity being about half of that dealt with during the previous year. Shortage of labour and heavier wash dirt were the main factors that led to reduced production. During the latter half of the year the company commenced to shift the plant to a more suitable area, and sluicing will be resumed early in 1944.

Inangahua County

Mount David Sluicing Claim, Blackwater.—Water-race repairs and pipe-line adjustments were not completed until nearly the end of the year and at a time which coincided with an unusually severe drought in this district, which lowered the level of the Big River to a degree that made it impossible to fill the Mount David race.

Grey County

Moonlight Sluicing Claim, Blackball.—This company treated 58,100 cubic yards of wash for a return that was only barely payable. It operated under disadvantages of scarcity of suitable labour and inability to put through an increased yardage due to the very compact and stony wash that has to be worked.

Golden Sands Claim, Barrytown.—Owing to shortage of labour this claim could not be operated continuously on three shifts, but to counteract this disadvantage the area worked during the year under review was of much higher value than usual, consequently the company's operations yielded satisfactory returns for the amount of ground treated.

MISCELLANEOUS MINERALS

Asbestos.—The Hume Pipe Company (Aust.), Ltd., from a mineral license situated in Block 1, Flora Survey District, crushed 1,747 cubic yards of serpentine rock which yielded 186 tons 13 cwt. of asbestos fibre. Considerable improvements were effected in the dressing plant, resulting in the production of higher-grade fibre.

Mica.—A short period at the beginning of the year was spent prospecting the mica deposits at Matukituki Range, South Westland, and sufficient information was gained to warrant the construction of a pack-track to expedite further prospecting. A survey was commenced in June, but owing to the severe climatic conditions it was not completed until near the end of the year. Tenders are invited for the construction of two and a half miles of track, and it is hoped to have the work put in hand early in 1944.

Petroleum.—The New Zealand Oil Concessions, Ltd., using the Superior Oil Co.'s drilling plant, completed No. 2 hole at Marsden and then terminated their operations on the license held in this district. The New Zealand Oil Exploration, Ltd., carried out an additional 571 ft. of structural drilling, making a total of 1,364 ft. drilled by rotary and keystone rigs for the purpose of gaining geological data. On the company's behalf the Superior Oil Co. drilled a hole, "Kawhaka No. 1," in the Arahura Valley. The boring of this hole was quickly completed, and the results obtained led to its abandonment.

Pottery Clay.—Messrs. K. A. Polglaze and party produced 1,300 tons of pottery clay from underground workings at Kaka, which realized £1,722 10s. Due to lack of prospecting either by driving from the workings or by surface boring, the amount of this valuable clay that can be commanded from existing excavations is strictly limited.

From a clay-pit situated on the Tadmor Saddle, 50 tons of inferior pottery clay were produced, its value being only 12s. 6d. per ton, against that of £1 6s. 6d. per ton paid for material won by Polglaze and party.

Iron-ore.—In the Onakaka district 316 tons were quarried, which realized £190. The fine-ground ore is used chiefly in gasworks.

Talc and Magnesite.—From the Upper Takaka district the Lime and Marble Co. obtained 62 tons of talc, valued at £201 10s. An amount of 171 tons of magnesite, valued at £153 16s. was also obtained. These minerals were ground to the desired fineness at the company's plant at Mapua, Motueka, and subsequently delivered to various users throughout the Dominion.

GENERAL REMARKS: MINING AND PROSPECTING

A repetition of the previous year's difficulties was experienced by the metalliferous mining industry, and the weaker concerns had to cease production.

Contraction of operations, due principally to difficulty in obtaining replacements, led to a diminished gold return, and prospecting has now practically ceased in all parts of this district, excepting a small amount of check boring on producing dredging claims. A total footage of 3,255 ft. was drilled by larger operating companies, the work being carried out between original prospecting holes or lines of boreholes as circumstances warranted.

FATAL ACCIDENTS

One fatal accident occurred during the year. On 25th November, H. Taggart stackerman, employed on the Ngahere Dredge, was killed. Deceased, who was in charge of the screen, was effecting repairs to the screen along with three other men. The screen started to revolve in the reverse direction and trapped Taggart, who was crushed between the ribs of the screen and the screen casing, suffering fatal injuries.

SERIOUS NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS

On 19th April J. Gough, employed as snigger at the Arahura Dredge, received a fractured skull and rib injuries. He was clearing bush ahead of the dredge when the strop holding the bush block carried away, and Gough was struck down.

On 8th June Herbert R. Cooper, labourer, employed as assistant wash-up man and general hand on the Marsden Dredge, slipped and fell on the deck whilst carrying an oxygen cylinder and fractured his left arm.

On 24th July G. E. Armstrong, labourer, Kanieri Dredge, suffered a fractured right wrist. While priming the high-pressure pump, he was hit by the handle of a small crab winch.

PROSECUTIONS UNDER THE MINING ACT

On 29th June at Reefton a dredgemaster was charged with failing to record in writing his opinion as to the condition and safety of the buildings, pontoons, safety appliances, &c., as required by section 32 (3) of the Mining Amendment Act, 1937. He was convicted and fined £1 and costs.