

ACCIDENTS

There were no fatalities, but D. J. Hume, an employee at Henderson's Quarry, Ngongotaha, was unfortunate enough to fall and break his right thigh towards the end of the year. He had previously been trimming the face in order to make it safe, and while descending to the floor of the quarry with the aid of a rope was struck on one elbow with a falling stone. This caused him to let go his hold of the rope and fall about 10 ft. to the floor of the quarry, with the result stated. Mr. Hume is a fully experienced quarryman, and was wearing a safety-belt and equipment at the time.

PROSECUTIONS

Nil.

WEST COAST INSPECTION DISTRICT (G. W. LOWES, Inspector of Mines)

QUARTZ-MINING

Inangahua County

Blackwater Mine, Waitata.—Excepting a short delay in resumption of development and stoping operations at the commencement of New Year due to completing shaft repairs commenced when the mine closed down for Christmas holidays, work was continuous with a labour quota equal to producing only half the mill capacity, and development fell off in a similar proportion.

Employing an average of 111 men, 9,977 fine oz. gold were recovered from 24,328 tons won from stopes and development between Nos. 14 and 16 Levels. Total development footage for the year amounting to 1,117 ft., a decrease of 721½ ft. when compared with the previous year, produced the following results: 821½ ft. development was on reef assaying 12·03 dwt. over a width of 28 in. Of this amount, 711 ft. was on payable reef assaying 13·57 dwt. over a width of 27 in., 110½ ft. on unpayable reef were exposed of a value of 3·79 dwt. over 33 in., and the total is made up of 295½ ft. driven off reef.

No. 15 Intermediate Drive North from Crosscut East was driven 8 ft. on reef averaging 23 in. in width and 15·32 dwt. in value and holed to stope.

No. 15 Intermediate Drive South was driven 39½ ft. on reef track.

No. 15 Level South, now, 1,631 ft. south of main shaft, was driven 24 ft., 6 ft. being on reef averaging 36 in. in width and 18·88 dwt. in value, 18 ft. being off reef. In addition, a branch drive in this level at 924 north of shaft was driven 24 ft all off reef.

No. 16 Drive North was extended 232 ft. on reef averaging 18 in. in width and 14·5 dwt. in value, 10 ft. being off reef. A branch drive in this level at 3,005 ft. north was advanced 8 ft. all off reef.

No. 16 Drive South was driven 135 ft., with 105 ft. on reef averaging 44 in. in width and 11·76 dwt. in value and 30 ft. on unpayable reef averaging 44 in. in width and 3·90 dwt. in value.

A branch drive in No. 16 South at 2,322 ft. north was driven 28 ft. off reef.

Out of a total of 508½ ft. of driving, 381 ft. was driven on reef assaying 13·06 dwt. over 28 in. Of this footage, 351 ft. was on payable reef averaging 26 in. over 14·34 dwt. and the total driven off reef was 127½ ft.

In addition to driving on Nos. 15 and 16 Levels North and South, 99½ ft. of crosscutting was completed and was complementary with general development work, connection of stopes, and making provision for adequate ventilation. Rising completed on Nos. 15 and 16 Levels totalled 373 ft. with 337½ ft. risen on reef, giving an average value of 12·08 dwt. over 27 in. Payable reef amounted to 311½ ft. assaying 12·9 dwt. over 28 in., while 26 ft. of unpayable reef was disclosed assaying 4·12 dwt. over 18 in. in addition to 35 ft. risen off reef.

Winze-sinking from Nos. 14 and 15 Levels reached a footage of 136 ft. with 33 ft. off reef. The distance sunk on reef assayed 8·56 dwt. over 32 in. Of this amount, 48½ ft. of payable reef assayed 15·20 dwt. over 29 in. and unpayable reef accounted for 54½ ft., value 3·64 dwt. over 35 in.

The labour position did not improve during the year and operational difficulties were increased by absenteeism and increase in number of minor accidents.

The sinking of main North shaft to open No. 17 Level was to be an important item of the company's development policy for the year, but difficulty in securing the necessary skilled labour delayed commencement of work. When the decreased price of gold was brought about in August by alteration of exchange-rate it had the effect of compelling the company's directors and management to reconsider their policy, and postponement in the meantime of shaft-sinking was the first decision reached.