

## THE MINING BUREAU.

The publication of the *New Zealand Mines Record* has been continued since August, 1897, by the Secretary of the Mining Bureau. Valuable information in reference to improved mining processes and machinery is collected from the principal centres of mining activity in Great Britain, South Africa, the United States, and the Australian Commonwealth, and disseminated through the pages of the *Record*. This is a distinct advantage to those engaged in the industry in this colony; while the reports in reference to the metalliferous and coal deposits of New Zealand that appear from time to time are frequently copied into the mining journals and technical magazines in the countries referred to, and the varied mineral resources of the colony are thus brought into prominent notice.

## DEPARTMENTAL.

Throughout the year the work of the Department has been efficiently carried out by the respective officers at the various centres. The inspection of mines is, I have reason to believe, faithfully carried out, and the visits of Inspectors are as frequent as is really necessary. Experience goes to prove that over-inspection on the part of Government officers is as much to be deprecated as under-inspection; and that where inspections are more frequent than circumstances demand there is a tendency on the part of some persons in charge of mining operations to endeavour to transfer their responsibilities to the Inspectors of Mines, and, through them, to the Government. This is a condition totally foreign to the objects for which inspection was instituted, and I would emphasize the fact that our mining legislation has given power to the men employed in mines to have independent inspections made by suitable persons on their behalf. By this means the interests of workers are amply safeguarded without unduly interfering with mine management and development.

## CONCLUSION.

So far as present evidences go, there appears every prospect that the value of minerals produced during this year will exceed that of the period which has been reviewed in this Statement.

In regard to quartz-mining, the present position of several mines is such that good returns may be confidently expected, and there are indications that a considerable degree of permanence is assured. On the other hand, there are places where this class of mining is at present under a cloud, but it is to be hoped that prospecting-work may prove sufficiently encouraging to warrant developments on a large scale.

Hydraulic and alluvial mining keeps fairly steady, and is, I think, likely to continue so for some time yet, although, as already pointed out, it must not be forgotten that the shallow and easily worked ground which could be operated without the expenditure of much capital is gradually becoming exhausted. The method of gold-mining by means of dredges will continue for several years, and it is from dredge mining and the hydraulic methods that the output of alluvial gold will be obtained in the future.

The coal-mines of the colony are year by year showing an increase in their aggregate production, and, with the advance of population and the growth of other industries in our leading centres, the demands on the mines are likely to become greater, and the requirements will be increased if the negotiations for the manufacture of iron and steel in the colony are carried to a practical issue.

Other minerals, at present unworked, will, no doubt, yet contribute to the progress of New Zealand.