

At Alexandra, pending the construction of a suitable road, coal is being boated down river for the supply of four dredges in the gorge, distances ranging from two to four miles. This is not only costly, but a perilous undertaking, and several boat-accidents have been narrowly averted.

Dredging operations in the Cromwell Gorge were seriously hampered by the effects of two heavy thunderstorms which occurred early in the year, whereby enormous quantities of material were carried into the river, causing its bed to be raised several feet in many places. It has recently been noticed that the bars thus formed on the river are gradually but slowly wearing down toward former levels.

OTHER MINERALS.

CINNABAR.

Waitahuna Cinnabar Company, Waitahuna Heights.—(18/4/1902): At the end of July, 1901, a cross-drive had been driven 231 ft. to cut the lode, and a further contract for a drive of 300 ft. along the lode was let to Gibb and Roberts. On the date of my visit a total length of 200 ft. had been completed, and latterly the character of the lode material had improved, although no cinnabar had yet been struck. The foot-wall is well defined, and carries a band of pug, while the lode material is becoming softer. Should ore be struck soon there will be fully 125 ft. of backs to rise on. Expectations are, however, centred on the junctions of two small lodes with the main lode, one of these being 95 ft. ahead of the present face, and the other 155 ft. ahead. From the latter junction 200 ft. of backs will be available. The drives are 6 ft. high by 4 ft. 6 in. wide, and are well timbered where necessary, the main crosscut being through good standing country-rock. Present operations are purely prospective, but the company's engineer, Mr. L. O. Beal, jun., thinks that present appearances on the surface and in the drive justify further efforts and the necessary expenditure on the part of the company. Proceedings at the mine are often hampered by bad weather and the difficulty of access to the mine. A new surface lode has lately been discovered. It has a well-defined foot-wall running behind and parallel to the foot-wall of the main lode. Later information from the engineer is to the effect that a new contract had been entered into in December, 1902, with Messrs. Roberts Bros. A crosscut was driven from the main lode on to the back lode. This was found to be coming in to junction with the main lode, and as the cost of driving was cheaper on the main lode this is being pushed ahead for 90 ft. further. The lode is running north-west and south-east, and more cinnabar is appearing in the stone as the drive is continued to the north-west. The main drive is timbered, and side laths put in.

SCHEELITE.

Of this mineral 41 tons is returned as having been produced during the year, principally from the Macrae's district.

Inquiries are being made in reference to the scheelite-mine at Glenorchy, and present indications are that the mine may soon be in work again.

ANTIMONY.

The lode at Alexandra had been opened up and trial shipments sent to Melbourne, but it is understood that the cost of production and heavy freights in conveying the mineral to a seaport town had absorbed the profits, and the claim is now abandoned.

IRON LODE.

Attention having been drawn to an alleged discovery at Moke Creek, a visit was paid to the locality, but unfortunately the deposit was then covered with snow, and the person who made the discovery regretted that he was unable to produce a specimen of the lode formation.

GALENA.

The Tarawera lode at Preservation Inlet had been tested in a small way, but work is now discontinued.

COPPER.

Nothing doing on the Moke Creek or Waitahuna lodes.

Several applications have been made for licenses to prospect for copper on the Malvern Hills, Canterbury.

PHOSPHATE ROCK.

A discovery of importance had been made on the Horse-shoe Bush Estate, Clarendon, Otago, where from 50 to 80 per cent. phosphate (boulder formation) is found in quantity immediately overlying the Milburn limestone-deposit. Some 2,000 tons had been produced to the end of the year.

ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES.

QUARTZ-MINES.

Non-fatal.

22/9/1902.—Samuel Stevens, working alone in a quartz-prospecting drive at Matarae, was pinned to the floor by a slab of stone weighing about 5 cwt., which fell from the side at the face. Stevens sustained a large scalp-wound on the right side of his head.

22/10/1902.—Oswald Mosley, miner, was winding up a bucket of dirt, a total distance of 7 ft. from the sump, with a hand-windlass, when his hand slipped, and the handle suddenly reversing struck Mosley on the face, the left eye being subsequently removed.