

GOLDFIELDS WATER-RACES.

The total revenue derived from sales of water during the financial year ended 31st March, 1908, amounted to £2,359 3s. 11d., and the total expenditure thereon, including maintenance, amounted to £3,477 3s. 9d., showing a deficit of £1,117 19s. 10d.

INSPECTORS OF MINES.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission, a change has been made in the status of the Assistant Inspectors of Mines. These officers have now been raised to the rank of Inspector, with clearly defined duties. Each inspection district will in future have an officer whose duties will be chiefly devoted to the supervision of coal-mines, while the other Inspector will have charge of the various quartz and alluvial mines and dredges. These changes will, it is hoped, tend to the greater safety of those employed in mining undertakings.

DOMINION ANALYST.

The work of this branch of the Mines Department is of considerable importance to the community. Numerous assays and analyses are made for the various Departments of the public service, and to assist prospectors and others interested in the development of the natural resources of the Dominion mineral samples are reported on free of charge, the only stipulation being that full particulars of the locality where the samples were collected are supplied.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Last year the first annual report of the reorganized Geological Survey was issued, in addition to three bulletins giving respectively the results of detailed geological and topographical work in the Parapara Subdivision, Nelson; in the Coromandel Subdivision, Auckland; and in the Cromwell Subdivision, Otago.

During the season of 1907-8 a systematic survey has been conducted in many parts of the Dominion—in the Whangaroa and Thames Subdivisions, Auckland; in the Whatatutu Subdivision, Gisborne; in the Heaphy Subdivision, Nelson; in the Mount Radiant Subdivision, Westport; in the Miconui Subdivision, Westland; and in the Mid-Wakatipu Subdivision, Western Otago. Special topographical work was carried out in the neighbourhood of the Franz Josef Glacier, while a reconnaissance exploration was made of the central part of the Urewera Country. The work in both the Miconui and Mid-Wakatipu Subdivisions is now complete, and bulletins thereon will be ready for presentation to Parliament this session. The survey operations in the Whangaroa and Thames Subdivisions are well advanced, and are expected to be finished by the beginning of 1909.

In addition to the work to be carried on in the two last-mentioned subdivisions, detailed investigations will also be continued during the coming season in the Whatatutu, Heaphy, and Mount Radiant Subdivisions; while it is hoped to inaugurate new operations in the Bay of Islands and Waihi Subdivisions, Auckland, and in the Greymouth Subdivision, Westland. It is expected that some special topographical work will be done at the Fox Glacier, and a reconnaissance will be carried into the mountainous country of South Westland.

CONCLUSION.

In bringing my remarks on the mining industry to a close, I would like to emphasize the fact that, as the miner gave a great impetus to settlement in the early days, so he will be found the settler's best friend in time to come, for he will provide the nucleus for industries and settlements which must eventually become the backbone of this Dominion. New Zealand has great stretches of mountain ranges that are as yet but partially explored. If we cast our eyes around the world we see that it is from similar chains of mountains that a large portion of the mineral wealth is obtained. It is our bounden duty to neglect no opportunity of exploring the back country, for it is there, to a great degree, we must look for new discoveries of auriferous quartz lodes and economic minerals. The construction of roads and tracks has already done much to open up places that were to a great extent formerly inaccessible, and that policy must be continued so as to allow the pioneer miner every opportunity of pursuing his hazardous and often ill-requited labours.