

PROSPECTING.

In the prosecution of prospecting for minerals assistance was given to miners during the year, chiefly through the medium of the local bodies' and miners' associations. This assistance is granted generally throughout the mining districts, and is being freely applied for, and invariably granted on the recommendation of Inspectors of Mines in promising localities, and also to assist in prospecting previously untried districts, such as the Urewera country, in which a prospecting party is being assisted at present. The total disbursements under this head last year amounted to £3,237.

GOLD-MINERS' RELIEF FUND.

The gold-miners' relief inaugurated by the passing of the Mining Amendment Act, 1910, came into existence on the 3rd December, 1910, and during the period between its coming into force and the end of the financial year £1,796 10s. 7d. was collected. Payment of relief to injured miners is now made in accordance with the regulations under the Act. The advantages of this measure of relief to the men engaged in our gold-mining industry and their families is now being realized and highly appreciated in the mining districts.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Important changes in the *personnel* of the Geological Survey staff have taken place during the year. Dr. J. M. Bell, who has been Director since January, 1905, resigned his post for private reasons last December, and left New Zealand in March of this year. Mr. P. G. Morgan, M.A., General Geologist, has been promoted to the vacant position. Other officers have retired or been transferred to other Departments, but the efficiency of the staff has been maintained by new appointments.

During 1910-11 detailed geological surveys were made in the Tairua-Waihi, New Plymouth, and Buller-Mokihinui subdivisions. In addition, several visits of inspection to various localities were made by the Director and other officers. The publications issued include bulletins upon the Whatatutu, Thames, and Mount Radiant subdivisions, together with a geographical report on the Franz Josef Glacier. Several other reports are now in course of preparation or publication.

The detailed survey of the Tairua-Waihi Subdivision, which includes the very important mining district of Waihi, was completed early this year, but the detailed report upon the area is not yet ready for publication.

The survey of the New Plymouth Subdivision was completed during the past summer, and the report thereon is now in course of publication.

In January of this year a detailed survey of the Buller-Mokihinui Subdivision was begun. This area includes, besides the coal-areas tapped by the Westport-Mokihinui Railway, the little-known Orikaka or Mackley Coalfield.

During the next field season the detailed survey of the Buller-Mokihinui Subdivision will be continued and, if possible, completed. In the North Island it is intended to continue the survey of the area south of the Tairua-Waihi Subdivision. This area, which includes the Karangahake and Te Aroha goldfields, will be known as the Aroha Subdivision.

CONCLUSION.

This being the fiftieth anniversary of the first important discovery of gold in New Zealand by the late Mr. Gabriel Reed, at the now famous spot known as Gabriel's Gully, near Lawrence, Otago, I cannot conclude my observations on the mining industry without calling attention to the enormous impetus given not only to mining, but also to every other industrial pursuit in our country, by that valuable discovery. For instance, the value of gold produced increased from £17,585 in 1860 to £751,873 in 1861, and to £2,431,723 in 1863. The population increased from about 65,000 in 1860 to 100,000 in 1861, and to 256,000 in 1871. Since the discovery of gold the mines of the Dominion have produced approximately £80,000,000 worth of gold and silver. The great influence the production of this enormous amount of wealth had on the settlement and progress of this young country can scarcely be realized.