

V. MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

SHEELITE.

The quantity of scheelite exported during the year amounted to 194 tons, valued at £27,784 as compared with 204 tons, valued at £21,498, in 1914. The following statement shows the quantity and value of scheelite exported since the year 1899 :—

Year.			Quantity.	Value.	Year.			Quantity.	Value.
			Tons.	£				Tons.	£
1899	..	..	32	2,788	1909	..	..	58	4,263
1900	..	..	54	2,635	1910	..	..	143	15,070
1901	..	..	2	83	1911	..	..	138	11,853
1902	..	..	39	1,200	1912	..	..	135	13,347
1903	..	..	42	1,439	1913	..	..	221	22,933
1904	..	..	17	791	1914	..	..	204	21,498
1905	..	..	28	1,848	1915	..	..	194	27,784
1906	..	..	55	3,407	Totals ..			1,567	152,480
1907	..	..	137	15,486					
1908	..	..	68	6,055					

One of the most spectacular advances in commodity-prices occasioned by the war has been in tungsten, both metal and ore, scheelite being one form of the latter.* This advance has been due to the extraordinary demand for tungsten steel, an essential constituent in making high-speed-tool steel. The manufacture of immense quantities of military material has required greatly increased quantities of tool-steel, and consequently corresponding quantities of tungstic acid (WO₃), hence the advance in price.

On the 6th September, 1915, notice was given by His Excellency the Governor that the Imperial Government had instructed him to requisition all supplies of scheelite and other ore containing tungstic acid, and from that date the export to other markets was prohibited. All persons having such ore were required forthwith to notify the Mines Department, Wellington. The price fixed by the Imperial Government was £2 15s. per unit (a unit being 1 per cent. of tungstic acid in the sample) delivered at London or Liverpool, the scheelite concentrate, in which form the ore is shipped, to contain not less than 65 per cent. (i.e., 65 units) tungstic acid. Since this notification all shipments have been bought by the Mines Department and shipped to the Imperial Supply Board. Advances have been paid on assay certificates by the Dominion Analyst. Prior to 1915 the market for tungsten-ore was very poor. The price now fixed being an increase of about 80 per cent. In the United States of America ammunition-makers are reported to have paid during 1915 a considerably higher price than the above, and an attempt was made in that country to "corner" the supplies, but this was frustrated by the action of the Imperial Government in commandeering colonial supplies. Previous to the war Australia, New Zealand, Burma, and Straits Settlements supplied a very large proportion of the world's production of tungsten. Portugal and Spain are also producers, but the mines there are controlled to a large extent by British capital. The United States speculators therefore could only manipulate the supplies from Mexico and South America, which in comparison with British tungsten resources are inconsiderable.

In the following table is shown the quantity of quartz crushed and scheelite concentrate obtained for the year ended the 31st December, 1915 :—

Name of Mine or Company.	Locality.	Quartz crushed.	Scheelite (TungsticTrioxide) Concentrate obtained.	Value.
		Statute Tons.	Tons cwt. lb.	£ s. d.
Dominion Consolidated Company ..	Wakamarina, Marlborough	17,484	110 0 0	14,133 2 3
Glenorchy Scheelite Company and fourteen parties of miners	Glenorchy, Lake County	682	60 2 34	8,520 0 0
Golden Point	Macrae's, Waihem o County	569	27 4 28	4,080 16 10
Morning Star	Ditto	9	0 14 0	130 0 0
Berry Syndicate	"	11	0 16 45	140 11 5
McGregor and Innes	"	16	0 19 93	185 0 0
A. A. Cockerell	"	8	1 4 25	234 18 1
A. Phelan	"	2	0 5 65	50 19 6
Stoneburn Mining Company ..	Stoneburn, Waihem o County	978	7 8 56	1,425 1 10
Mareburn Gold and Scheelite Company	Mount Highway, Waihem o County	641	3 17 12	616 4 8
Buckland and Ewart	Barewood, Taieri County	20	3 0 0	430 0 0
H. S. Molyneaux	"	1	0 4 103	42 9 4
Totals, 1915		20,421	216 9 13	29,989 3 11
Totals, 1914		21,745	221 18 0	21,824 18 6

In addition, certain of the above mines produced gold as follows: Dominion Consolidated, £12,472; Golden Point, £686; McGregor and Innes, £20; Stoneburn, £150; Mareburn, £246.

* Tungstic acid was first discovered by the Swedish chemist Scheele, the word "tungsten" meaning heavy stone. Scheelite is very heavy.