

There has been a decrease in the value of bullion produced from quartz-mines amounting to £123,690. To this reduction all quartz-mining districts have contributed, although slight increases have occurred at a few mines, including Waihi, Blackwater, and the Dominion Consolidated. No new developments of importance have occurred, and the year has been unimportant for the quartz-mining industry.

*Northern Inspection District.*

At the Waihi Mine a crosscut is being projected from No. 12 (1,447½ ft.) level in a favourable dacite country. At No. 11 (1,301 ft.) level the Edward and Empire lodes have proved payable, but the Martha lode has been very irregular in value. Turbo pumps having been installed in No. 4 shaft are now working satisfactorily: this shaft had at the end of the year attained a total depth of 1,470½ ft. from the surface.

The Waihi Grand Junction Mine main shaft has been continued to a total depth of 1,300 ft.; from 1,270 ft. downwards being through a low-grade quartz-calcite. Sinking is now suspended owing to the influx of water exceeding the capacity of the electric sinking-pump—viz., 40,000 gallons per hour. Stationary high-lift turbo pumps were installed at No. 7 (1,200 ft.) level. At that level the Empire and Royal lodes have been considerably developed, and have proved profitable, although there has been a decline in the average value of ore treated from £2 4s. 1d. to £1 15s. 8d. during the past year.

At the Talisman Consolidated Mine the Talisman shaft was sunk to a depth of 40 ft. below No. 15 level, and the Otis pump installed thereat. A cross-cut was driven westward from that shaft, connecting with the Bonanza section No. 15 level. Above No. 14 level all ore has been extracted in the Bonanza and Dubbo sections. In the Woodstock section the main south drive was connected with the Talisman shaft at a depth of 76 ft. below No. 14 level. Driving south on the Maria lode off No. 2 crosscut several short runs of ore were proved. It is proposed to considerably extend the east and west crosscuts from the main north drive, Woodstock section, also to continue driving south from No. 2 crosscut. In the Bonanza section winzes are now being sunk from No. 15 level and the north drive continued. On the occasion of my last inspection the deepest workings on the lode—viz., a winze from No. 15 level, exposed very poor mineral, containing a considerable proportion of galena in large crystals.

The Waihi-Paeroa Gold Extraction Company having installed a large Priestman dredge is now enabled to obtain a more constant supply of old tailing from the Ohinemuri River, and to deal more effectively with timber on the river-bed. During the year 148,100 tons of tailing was raised and treated for a return of £39,700, as compared with 144,300 tons for £42,950 during 1914.

*West Coast Inspection District.*

For much of the information herein concerning West Coast quartz-mines I am indebted to the Inspector of Mines for that district.

Dominion Consolidated Mining and Development Company: Mining has been carried on during the whole year with the best results yet obtained by this company. The value of gold obtained was £12,471 12s. 8d., and scheelite-concentrate amounting to 110 tons was sold for £14,133 2s. 3d. A dividend of £2,250 was declared. The development of the mine is not being pushed on as it should be, and work below No. 3 level is urgently required to find the ore below the fault which interrupts it at this level. An improved water-supply has now been secured, and this has enabled milling to be carried on without interference during the dry months; and this factor, together with the increased price of scheelite due to the war, has evidently produced the improved return for the year.

Development at Murray Creek Mine has been very satisfactory during the year, the lode discovered at No. 2 level having assumed a steeper dip, and at No. 3 level has been lengthened to 366 ft. At this level the country is less disturbed than above, and there is reason to expect that the lode will be as good at No. 4 level, for which the shaft is now being sunk. The gold-content of the ore as proved by crushings is nearly 1 oz. per ton, which even in a small lode should leave a fair margin of profit. The mine, however, will not be worked cheaply, owing to the small inclination of the lode; the hanging-wall is heavy, and the ore has to be trucked a very long way to the mill.

At the Energetic Mine prospecting by driving on two separate lines of lode is in progress. The situation of this claim is a good one, between the Keep-it-Dark and Wealth of Nations on the south, and the Murray Creek and Golden Treasure on the north. There appears to be a likelihood of more than one payable lode running into it.

At the Wealth of Nations Mine work has been carried on during the whole year. The return, £40,710 2s. 6d., from 10,250 tons treated, shows a slight increase upon that of 1914. The lode has been struck in No. 12 (1,980 ft.), the bottom level, and is quite payable in value and up to 25 ft. in width. Altogether this mine looks better than it did a year ago.

Work at the Keep-it-Dark Mine has been carried on during the whole year, but the yield £11,064 14s., from 10,985 tons, must have been unpayable. There is plenty of ore in the mine, but, unfortunately, it is too low-grade to pay for working, and unless something of better value is discovered in the next level it is hardly likely that work will be long continued.

The Progress Mines has had another unprofitable year, having crushed 36,160 tons for a return of £37,695, or £1 0s. 9d. per ton. No important development has occurred during the year, and the lost lode beyond the main faults remains undiscovered. Ore reserves are rapidly diminishing.

At New Big River Mine the main shaft has been deepened, and No. 11 (1,760 ft. level has been driven and a rise put up to meet the lode. This development was not completed in time to keep up the monthly returns after the ore became exhausted above No. 10 (1,575 ft.) level, and for this reason the output for the year was only £11,869, from 2,938 tons, as compared with £30,195 from 6,273 tons for 1914. The management anticipate better results again now that the new level has been opened up.