

with water cemented off, and it is anticipated that the old oil horizon will be penetrated shortly. No. 3 bore: Depth, 4,019 ft., with 4 in. casing. No work has been done to this well during the year. This well flows intermittently. Rotary bore: 4 in. and 5 in. casing being withdrawn. No. 2 bore: Depth, 3,045 ft., in 8 in. casing. New derrick erected but no drilling done. Oil obtained during the year, 7,550 gallons.

Blenheim Oil Company.—Blenheim well: During the year 253 ft. have been drilled, making the total depth 5,274 ft. About the end of July the casing parted, bent, and telescoped. The fishing operations which followed were not completed until the end of December. Drilling has since been resumed, and although a very strong outburst of gas occurred in January no oil was obtained. Production from 2,200 ft. during the year, 7,940 gallons.

Waipatiki Oil-wells (Limited).—The main bore has been sunk to a depth of 3,468 ft.—1,132 ft. having been drilled for the year. At several points a good flow of natural gas was met with, and indications of oil strongly in evidence. A very strong flow of natural gas is obtainable from three bores put down to a depth of 80 ft., 120 ft., and 140 ft. respectively, and also from the surface a short distance from these bores, and it is estimated that the present supply of gas per diem is about 30,000 cubic feet. Certain experiments with a gas-engine proved that natural gas was far more efficient than ordinary coal-gas. A gas-engine has been obtained, which is now being installed, and it is hoped will develop sufficient power to drive the machinery and plant by electricity.

Accidents.

I am pleased to state that no fatal accidents occurred in the metal-mines under my supervision during the year, but unfortunately a man named Frank Salmon Drury, aged thirty-two years, was killed on the 29th October at the Taranaki Oil-wells (Limited) No. 5 bore by being struck on the head by chain-tongs. This accident was caused by the pin holding the chain in place shearing.

Non-fatal Accidents.

26th March: F. Houghton lost the sight of one eye by a blasting accident in the Golden Belt Mine, Neavesville.

14th November: L. F. Collins had the drum of both ears injured by concussion from a shot in the Waihi Mine.

Full details of accidents are contained in tabulated remarks of the Inspecting Engineer of Mines.

NORTH AUCKLAND INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. BOYD BENNIE, Inspector of Mines).

New Zealand Quicksilver Mines (Limited).—The former company, known as the "Whangarei Cinnabar-mining Company," was absorbed by the new company, under the above title, in July last, the new company taking over all assets and liabilities as from the 19th July, 1918. During the year there were mined and treated at the company's works 582 tons (estimated) of ore, for a return of 11,296 lb. of mercury, valued at £2,824, being at the rate of 5s. per pound at Auckland. During that period an average of fourteen men were employed by the company at their mine and works.

It is reported that the company's mines are under option for sale to a British company, who have had the mines examined by a well-known mining engineer in the Auckland District. The result of that inspection is not known yet, or only by the option-holding company. Mining development at the mine during the year has been much neglected, the reserve ore in the mine being worked. Work in the form of sinking, driving, and crosscutting was entirely neglected, due, I suppose, in a measure, to the shortage of miners and also to the isolated nature of the mining claim. During the year the company has built several huts for the workmen, and is erecting mine offices and improving the manager's residence, all of which were much needed.

By a rearrangement of the boundaries of the Whangarei and Bay of Islands Counties the mines are now in the Whangarei County, and already some improvements have been made to the roads leading to the mines. Mining-timber is difficult to obtain. It appears that a settler adjacent to the mine has got a license to remove kauri, rimu, and totara timber standing or lying on his pastoral lease over the mining company's claim; in consequence of this there has been friction between the company's officials and the settler over access to the mine and using timber found on the mining claim.

Collins's Alluvial Cinnabar Claim.—The Collins brothers have been busy during the year in preparing to work the mine, their time being occupied in forming a water-dam, with tail-race and ground tram, but no real mining has been done.

Joffre Mine (D. X. McLeod, owner).—An adit level had been driven on a cinnabar-lode formation. I visited the mine twice during the year and found that little or no work had been done in extending the tunnel referred to. At a distant portion of the claim a prospecting-drive has been driven, but nothing of real value was discovered. Two bores were put down. The claim is not manned as required by the Mining Act.

There are a number of mining claims granted on the field, but they are apparently held for speculative purposes. The New Zealand Quicksilver-mining Company, Collins brothers, and D. X. McLeod are the only ones working on their claims.