

company's property. On what is known as the Kathleen reef a shaft was sunk 22 ft. on stone about 4 ft. wide, but only very poor values were found. On what is known as the Snowy reef, about 6 chains east of the main shaft, a tunnel was put in for 28 ft., and a winze put down from it for 56 ft., from which at a depth of 50 ft. some 29 ft. of driving was carried out. This work revealed the presence of a small reef, about 18 in. wide, carrying a little gold. An average of fifteen men were employed.

South Big River Mine.—Six men were employed throughout the year, and a considerable amount of prospecting-work was carried out. No. 3 adit was extended north a further 130 ft., making a total of about 890 ft. from mouth. A crosscut east from this adit at a point about 740 ft. from the mouth was extended 247 ft., making a total of 435 ft. In this crosscut, at about 280 ft. from the main adit, a reef—or, rather, stockwork—was intersected, and this was driven on north for 73 ft. and south for 49 ft. None of the work revealed payable values. A little crushed quartz was found in the northern extension of the adit, but it carried no values. The stockwork referred to as having been driven on from the east crosscut carried about 4 dwt. gold per ton.

Progress Mine.—No mining-work was done, but a retreatment of the old sands at the battery was continued, 186 oz. 3 dwt. gold being recovered, which was valued at £573 1s. 10d.

Wealth of Nations Mine.—The year was not a very satisfactory one for the company operating this mine. The renewal of the upper section of the Energetic shaft, which, as mentioned in last year's report, had collapsed in the previous October, took longer than had been anticipated, and it was not until May that more active mining and crushing operations could be resumed. The shaft had to be entirely retimbered for about 180 ft., to the old No. 1 level. Since resuming stoping, some 3,507 tons of ore was broken and treated, for a yield of 1,692 oz. 8 dwt. by amalgamation, and 639 oz. 16 dwt. by cyanidation, or a total of 2,332 oz. 4 dwt. altogether, valued at £9,204 6s. 3d. Very little development work of any kind was carried out, operations being practically confined to the stoping of the No. 13 level south block, which is being rapidly worked out. On an average, twenty-five men were employed.

Alexander River Reefs.—In March the newly formed Alexander Mines, Ltd., took over this property and started operations on the 27th of that month. Since then the following development work was carried out up to the end of the year:—No. 1 level north: This was extended 30 ft. in stone of an average width of 20 in., making a total distance on reef of 152 ft., with the face still showing reef 15 in. wide. No. 2 level north: This was advanced 86 ft. on stone averaging 4 ft. to 5 ft. in width, making a total distance on reef of 142 ft., with stone 3 ft. in width still showing in the face. No. 2 level winze: This was started at the end of No. 2 level, and was sunk 48 ft., the whole of which was on stone which, towards the bottom, gradually narrowed till it was only about 18 in. in width. The country in the winze was going away much flatter than in the upper portion of the mine. No. 2 level crosscut: This was put out for 14 ft. in an easterly direction without disclosing anything of value. No. 3 level crosscut: This adit, which is about 100 ft. lower than No. 2, was put in hand with the intention of cutting the lode worked in the upper levels. It was extended in a south-easterly direction for 255 ft. without meeting reef, but two reef-tracks were cut, one at 142 ft. in and the other at 210 ft. The first of these was driven on north for 18 ft. and the other in the same direction for 20 ft. without striking stone, but both look promising for making stone. The small electric plant which had been used by the prospectors for generating power for driving the battery was found to give such unsatisfactory service that a 12 horse-power oil-engine was installed in its place, enabling crushing to be carried on more continuously. The great cost of getting supplies of oil to the mine made this method of driving the plant very costly. A small cyanide plant was also erected. During the period 352 tons of quartz was mined and treated for a return by amalgamation of 675 oz. 5 dwt. gold, and by cyanidation 131 oz. 11 dwt., or 806 oz. 16 dwt. in all, valued at £3,003 5s. 9d. Of this yield, some 21 oz. gold, valued at £70, was recovered from tailings that had been stacked by the Alexander Reefs Syndicate, the previous holders of the property. In view of the fact that there is no road to the mine, and that such a road cannot well be provided until such time as there is definite proof of the reef living down, it is to be regretted that the development at No. 3 level has not been more satisfactory, but it is confidently expected that future work will shortly yield better results. On an average, fourteen men were employed.

Westport District.

Britannia Mine.—A little further prospecting-work was done at this mine with a view to picking up a continuation of the shoot of stone located in the Stony Creek adit last year, but no further reef was met with.

Strathconor Reef.—In the vicinity of Rough and Tumble Creek, a tributary of the Mokihinui River, a small party carried out some work on a formation to which the above name was given. It was claimed by the prospectors that a lode formation occurred here up to 75 ft. in width, carrying good gold values. An inspection of the formation showed it, however, to be merely a wide band of metamorphosed greywacke, highly impregnated with iron-pyrites. A number of samples were taken from various parts of it, but only one of them, which came from a small vein of clean quartz, carried any trace of gold. A crosscut adit was subsequently put in across the formation for 100 ft, with the aid of Government subsidy, but failed to reveal any values.

DREDGES.

Rimu Flat Dredge.—This big American-type dredge continued operations throughout the year with considerably better results than in 1925. The gold-recovery amounted to 11,800 oz. gold, valued at £47,900, as against 8,714 oz., valued at £35,720, for the previous year. The ground turned over for the period amounted to 1,757,505 cubic yards. This year's recovery brings the total value of gold won by the dredge since it started to £237,970. No dividend was paid during the year, the total dividends remaining at £13,132. Towards the end of the year the recoveries were very good, some 1,100 oz. being recovered just prior to the end of the period from eleven days' dredging. Close check boring of the ground ahead of the dredge was carried out continuously, and it is now estimated that there is in sight at least two years' work on ground as good as that recently worked. The wooden pontoon showed signs of becoming waterlogged, and had gone down astern till practically no freeboard was showing, but two small pontoons, 30 ft. long, 10 ft. 6 in. wide, and 10 ft. deep, were prepared, and bolted to the main pontoon astern, one at each side, with the result that the boat was lifted considerably and is now showing normal freeboard. A number of inspections of the main pontoon were made, but there were no indications that it was making any water.

New River Dredge.—This dredge was put into commission in June on an area at Dunganville, in Grey County. The dredge was formerly in the Ahaura River. On removal to Dunganville it was lengthened, and the old steam plant was replaced by electric equipment, power being supplied by the Grey District Power Board. The dredge appears to have been floated in a rather unsuitable position, at the top or higher side of the dredging area, and close to the hillside. A fair amount of gold was got immediately after work was started, but the ground in the locality had been worked from tunnels in the old days of the Dunganville field, and in order to avoid any trouble, such as loss of water from the paddock, by breaking into the old workings, the dredge had to be turned in towards the high ground into an area in which clays and immense boulders predominated and very little gold had been deposited. Towards the end of the year, having got past danger area, the plant was turned outwards towards the flat again, and better results were obtained. The total recovery for the period the dredge was operated amounted to 567 oz. 2 dwt. gold, valued at £2,229 10s. On the average, twenty-five men were employed. It is anticipated that much better values will be got when the dredge gets farther out into the clean gravels, and it is proposed to test the ground ahead of it by Keystone drilling.

Ngahere Dredging Co.—This company has continued prospecting operations on its area on the south bank of the Grey River near Blackball. A number of shafts were sunk, with, I understand, satisfactory results, and it is now proposed to put a dredge to work there. Five men were employed throughout the year at the prospecting-work.