

Prospecting.—In this line of work not much activity has been noticeable. The Rimu Gold-dredging Co., which for some years previously had actively prospected various areas in Westland, confined its work to further testing its own ground ahead of the dredge by putting down a considerable number of Keystone-drill bores, which served to show that there are at least two years' work immediately ahead of the dredge on highly payable ground. At the Five-mile Beach, south of Okarito, Mr. R. T. Stewart carried out a good deal of prospecting by means of a privately owned power drill, and proved a considerable area to be payable. In the Golden Ledge adit, Keep-it-Dark Mine, Reefton, some 265 ft. of driving was carried out with the aid of Government subsidy, with a view to proving the possibilities of the Hercules line of reef north of previous workings. The driving revealed two short shoots of stone carrying fair values. Prospecting by driving at the Murray Creek Mine by a tribute party, with Government assistance, served to develop a run of stone for about 140 ft. under the old No. 1 (surface) adit. At the Ngahere Gold-prospecting Syndicate's holding on the Grey River, near Blackball, a number of shafts have been put down with, I am advised, satisfactory results. There has not been much field-prospecting, and such as there has been has not discovered anything of value.

Accidents.—Two fatalities occurred in connection with quartz-mining. In one of these a man named William Brown, cyanide foreman at the Blackwater Mines battery, was on the 22nd March treating with sulphuric acid a parcel of slimes from concentrates that had been roasted in the new Edwards roaster plant and subsequently cyanided, when he became ill, and, after lingering for some days in the Waituta and Reefton Hospitals, died at the latter on the 31st March. Analysis was made of the slimes, which showed that they contained arsenic, and it would appear that this, on treatment by the sulphuric acid, liberated arsenicretted hydrogen, which was inhaled by the deceased. An inquest was held and a verdict returned to the effect that deceased met with his death by being poisoned by fumes, there being no knowledge at the time that such dangerous fumes were present. Alterations were subsequently made at the treatment plant which ensured all fumes being carried quickly and safely out of the building, and the work of treating similar material has gone on ever since without any inconvenience to the workmen.

In the other case a man named Thomas Harris Harrison, mine-manager of the Dominion Consolidated Mine, Wakamarina, was examining the face in No. 1 level, Golden Bar section of the mine, when a slab of rock fell from the backs, killing him instantaneously. An inquest was held, and a verdict of accidental death returned.

SOUTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (MR. A. WHITLEY, Inspector of Mines).

QUARTZ AND ALLUVIAL MINING.

Waitaki County.

Livingstone.—Searle and party prospected an area in Golden Gully with a percussion drill, but the results obtained were not considered sufficiently encouraging to warrant any expenditure in plant for working the ground. Eighteen holes were bored to an average depth of 30 ft.

Maerewhenua.—Sluicing is carried on by small parties when water is available. The gold won amounted to 166 oz., valued at £650.

Waihemo County.

Mount Moore Gold-mining Co., Stoneburn.—The crosscut from the shaft at the 120 ft. level was driven 125 ft., at which point the Golden Bar reef was cut. The reef was driven upon 27 ft. south and 12 ft. north, and a rise put through to the adit level. Samples taken from the reef over a width of 42 in. gave an average value of £1 2s. per ton, which is not payable. At the adit level 135 ft. of driving and 45 ft. of rising was done to prospect for the middle reef, but it was not found. The company ceased operations in October.

Ounce Mine, Stoneburn.—Mr. E. B. Callery, owner of this mine, crushed 60 tons of ore for a return of 8 oz. 7 dwt. 18 gr. gold and 6 tons of scheelite.

Maniototo County.

St. Bathans Gold-mining Co., St. Bathans.—This company is having considerable difficulty in working the Kildare lead below the Scandinavian Water-race Co.'s elevating-paddock, owing to the presence of running sand and water. Work in the main shaft was suspended at a depth of 120 ft. from the surface, and a small shaft was sunk in the foot-wall of the lead from the paddock, where the lead was cut but could not be opened up. It was then exposed in the bottom of the paddock and an incline shaft sunk on it to a depth of 58 ft. The lead is 3 ft. wide in the incline shaft, and the gold won was equivalent to 14 dwt. per cubic yard.

Scandinavian Water-race Co., St. Bathans.—This company is working the United M. and E. Co.'s claim on tribute. Sluicing and elevating from a depth of 100 ft. has been in progress throughout the year. The gold won amounted to 466 oz., valued at £1,857.

Vinegar Hill Sluicing Co., Cambrian.—A paddock was elevated from a depth of 80 ft. on Morgan's lead. This is the limit to which elevating can be carried on with the company's water-supply. The lead averages 2 ft. in width and is still going down, but the great depth of valueless overburden makes it unprofitable to work by sluicing and elevating.

Morgan Bros. and Nicholson and Party, Cambrian.—These parties have been working their alluvial claims during the year.

Patearoa.—Johnston and McLean recovered 109 oz. gold, valued at £429, from their claim at Linnburn.

Naseby and Kyeburn.—Twenty men were employed at alluvial mining in these localities. The gold recovered amounted to 593 oz., valued at £2,248.

Tuapeka County.

Blue Spur.—The Gabriel's Gully Co. and Lawrence Sluicing Co. amalgamated for the purpose of working a block of auriferous cement on the boundary of their claims. Two elevators were in operation during the year, producing 1,967 oz. gold, valued at £7,749. The shareholders in each company received £1,000 in dividends.

Golden Crescent and Golden Rise Claims, Weatherstone.—Sluicing operations have been carried on throughout the year on a block of ground at Ballarat Hill for a return of 931 oz. gold, valued at £3,623. The Golden Crescent Co. paid £350 in dividends.

Treacy Bros., Evans Flat.—This party was working a deposit of clay and gravel on the east side of the Tuapeka River. The low pressure of the water-supply and hard nature of the clay made the work slow and unprofitable.

Sailor's Gully Sluicing Co., Waitahuna.—Sluicing operations were carried on in the upper part of the Waitahuna cement deposit. The cement was weathered and easily worked with the company's high-pressure water. Returns show that 656 oz. gold, valued at £2,420, was recovered, and dividends amounting to £1,050 paid.

Tallaburn Hydraulic Sluicing Co., Horseshoe Bend.—This company is working an old channel of the Clutha River. Water from the Tallaburn is delivered at the claim under a head of 400 ft., where it is used for breaking down and elevating the gravel. Gold valued at £627 was recovered.

Murchison Bros., Fourteen-mile Beach.—This party is working a beach in the Molyneux River by sluicing and elevating. The ground contains numerous large boulders, which are handled with a crane. Work can only be carried on when the river is low. The yield of gold amounted to 134 oz., valued at £523.

Vincent County.

Advance Mine, Old Man Range.—In the north drive at the battery level White's reef was cut off by a fault. 80 ft. of driving was done on the north side of the fault to prospect for it, but it was not found. 75 tons of quartz was crushed for a yield of 79 oz. of gold, valued at £323. 3 tons 11 cwt. of concentrates gave a return of £61.