

The Rimu Flat dredge worked for 84 per cent. of the possible digging-time, and turned over 1,880,847 cubic yards of gravel for a return of 14,092 oz., valued at £57,725, increases of 119,386 yards, 1,022 oz., and £4,597 over the returns of the previous year. A large amount of prospecting-work was done by Keystone drill, the total number of holes put down being sixty-eight and the average depth 38 ft.

The New River dredge ceased to operate in April, by which time it had turned over 32,000 cubic yards for a return of 219 oz., valued at £887. Since April the dredge has been reconstructed, as it had been found that it was not powerful enough for the work and was constantly breaking down. A new and longer ladder, with close-linked buckets, has been installed, together with the necessary driving machinery, and it is expected that in the present year the dredge will have a greatly increased turnover.

(3) ALLUVIAL MINING.

The following is a statement showing the value of production and dividends declared from alluvial gold-mines during 1928 :—

Name of Company.	Estimated Value of Gold produced.	Dividends declared.	
		During 1928.	Total to End of 1928.
	£	£	£
Nokomai Sluicing Co.	1,781	..	..
Big Beach Gold-mining Co.	2,746	..	..
St. Bathans's Syndicate	1,166	..	..
A. and G. Brown	1,052	..	..
Lawrence Sluicing Co.	804	375	4,125
Gabriel's Gully Sluicing Co.	804	1,000	20,215
Graham and party	1,659	75	4,463
Sailor's Gully Sluicing Co.	1,712	210	9,410
Round Hill Mining Co.	1,699	..	..
W. R. Smyth	1,367	..	..
Hohonu Gold Sluicing Co.	1,974	..	..
Stubbs and Steel	1,121	..	..
All other claims	22,632	..	..
Totals	40,517	1,660	Unknown.

V. MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

IRON.

The ironworks at Onakaka during 1928 smelted 12,725 tons of ore and produced 6,362 tons of pig iron, valued at £31,810. At the present time the plant is closed down pending the disposal of the accumulated stocks of pig iron. A pipe-making plant is being added to the existing plant, and it is hoped in this manner to supply the requirements of this country for pipes, and so enable the blast furnace to be kept in continuous operation.

SULPHUR.

A new company, the White Island Products, Ltd., took over the sulphur deposits on White Island, and during the year shipped 719 tons of sulphur, valued at £8,200. Additions to the machinery, plant, and housing accommodation on the island were made during the year.

PETROLEUM.

The Taranaki Oilfields, Ltd., continued drilling the No. 2 well at Waiapu, and reached a depth of 3,260 ft., when drilling was stopped and the plant removed. Drilling at the Gisborne No. 1 well was continued to a depth of 3,040 ft.; soft shale, which caved badly, was struck, and with the plant in use it was impracticable to continue, so operations were suspended. The Gisborne No. 2 well was begun in April on a favourable structure, and by the end of the year it was down to 2,000 ft. Shows of gas and oil were got in both No. 1 and No. 2 Gisborne wells.

The Blenheim Oil Well Reclamation Co. continued its efforts to recondition and bring into production the old Blenheim well. The well was cleared to 2,200 ft. and securely plugged. Water was shut off at 1,889 ft. Endeavours to bring in the well have so far been unsuccessful.

The New Zealand Oil Syndicate has drilled to 893 ft. at Prospect Valley, near Whangamomona, but without getting more than slight shows of gas and oil.

The Murchison Oil Co., operating at the Mangles River, near Murchison, drilled to 4,080 ft. At this depth the bailer was lost in the hole and operations were suspended.