

ALLUVIAL MINING.

In this branch of mining a slight improvement showed itself, the recovery of gold being 3,054 oz. 19 gr., valued at £11,856 19s. 2d., as against 2,712 oz. 4 gr., valued at £10,406 0s. 6d., won last year. There was a slight falling-off in the number of men regularly employed during the period, the figures being 132, as against 156 in 1927. In addition, a considerable number of men were employed part-time at the work.

Mahakipara Goldfields, Ltd.—Work at this mine was suspended at the latter part of 1927 owing to the inadequacy of the steam-driven pumps to deal with heavy inflows of water. A new and modern electrically operated plant having been installed by February, 1928, sinking was resumed, and continued without serious interruption until May, when bottom was reached at a depth of 135 ft. A line of bores previously put down close to the shaft indicated that the deepest part of the lead would be found some distance east of the opening, but subsequent events proved this assumption to be partly incorrect, as shaft and bores alike were in the deep ground. Developments south of the shaft have clearly defined the lead in that direction, as also its east and west boundaries. At the shaft the lead's width was 140 ft.; at 100 ft. south the east siding closed in to such an extent as to reduce the gutter's width to 40 ft., but, the west siding being regular throughout, this width has been maintained for the full length driven, a distance of 250 ft. A total of 640 ft. of driving and crosscutting gave 700 cubic yards of gravel, which on being treated produced 70 oz. of gold, or values amounting to 8s. per cubic yard. Prospects for the coming period are more encouraging, as a series of bores put down some distance south and east of a point coinciding with the working-places shows that the gutter will have considerable width later; and with this there is a steady increase of values as the faces advance south. The new plant consists of duplicate two-stage turbine sinking-pumps, driven by 75 h.p. vertical motors, a 40 h.p. winding-engine, fitted with all modern appliances, and other essential machines, the whole being operated by power obtained from the Marlborough Power Board. On an average sixteen men were employed throughout the year.

Marlborough (Deep Creek).—Two men were employed, winning 33 oz. 13 dwt. 7 gr. gold, valued at £129 15s. 2d.

Collingwood (including *Slate River, Rockville, and Parapara*).—Ten men were employed, winning 145 oz. 6 dwt. 3 gr. gold, valued at £550 17s. 4d.

Howard Diggings.—The returns to hand show that nine men were employed, winning 143 oz. 2 dwt. 18 gr. gold, valued at £555 13s. 5d.

Murchison (including *Iyell, Matakiki, Glenroy, Maruia, and Newton Flat*).—Fourteen men were employed, winning 278 oz. 11 dwt. 15 gr. gold, valued at £1,071 11s. 8d.

Reefton (including *Merrijigs, Blackwater, Caplestone, Antonio's, and Snowy Creek*).—Four men were employed, winning 142 oz. 7 dwt. 20 gr. gold, valued at £555 11s. 1d.

Buller (including *Charleston, Waimangaroa, Fairdown, and Burnett's Face*).—Eight men were employed, winning 174 oz. 13 dwt. 2 gr. gold, valued at £664 15s. 4d.

Grey Valley (including *Ahaura, Nelson Creek, Blackball, Totara Flat, Brunner, Moonlight, Stillwater, Waipuna, and Maori Gully*).—Five men were employed, winning 111 oz. 14 dwt. 13 gr. gold, valued at £443 10s. 9d.

Barrytown (including *North Beach and Cobden*).—One man was employed, winning 31 oz. 11 dwt. 21 gr. gold, valued at £121 19s.

Greymouth (including *South Beach, Rutherglen, and Dunganville*).—Five men were employed, winning 171 oz. 18 dwt. 11 gr. gold, valued at £672 14s. 6d.

Kumara (including *Stafford, Greenstone, Cape Terrace, and Callaghan's*).—Seventeen men were employed on these various fields, winning 961 oz. 11 dwt. 21 gr. gold, valued at £3,724 8s. 6d.

Hokitika (including *Rimu, Arahura, Blue Spur, Red Jack's, Kanieri, and Fox's*).—Twenty-nine men were employed, winning 444 oz. 7 dwt. 5 gr. gold, valued at £1,736 12s. 3d.

Ross (including *Waitaha and Mikonui*).—Two men were employed, winning 65 oz. 12 dwt. 19 gr. gold, valued at £255 4s. 11d.

Okarito (including *Matanui, Wataroa, Gillespie's Beach, and Bruce Bay*).—Ten men were employed, winning 279 oz. 15 dwt. 6 gr. gold, valued at £1,094 5s. 3d.

MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

Petroleum.—The Murchison Oil Co. continued drilling operations until May, when a depth of 4,080 ft. was reached with little or no change in the country penetrated. The drilling-cable showed signs of excessive wear at this stage, and the company was unfortunate in that the bailer-line parted, leaving the bailer in the hole. Fishing operations were at once commenced by the driller, but owing to the lack of proper fishing-tools and a new cable his efforts to raise the bailer were unsuccessful. With the bailer still in the hole, all work was suspended, the plant being left in charge of a caretaker.

Iron.—The Onakaka Iron and Steel Works closed down in the latter part of the year owing to the inability to place the whole of its product (pig iron) on the market. With a view to absorbing some of this pig iron the company has laid down and commenced to construct a modern pipe-making plant. The remainder of the machinery, &c., has been brought more up to date, and allowances made for increased outputs in the future. Resumption of operations, which should take place about the middle of the year 1929, with the various economies and improvements that have been effected should see the works established on a useful and permanent basis. Some 12,725 tons of crude ore were smelted, for a production of 6,362 tons of pig iron, valued at £31,810. Twenty-one men were employed on an average throughout the year.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Mining.—Alluvial mining showed an improvement on the previous year, but in quartz-mining there was a further falling-off, only 18,724 oz. being recovered, as against 21,551 oz. in 1927. There was a corresponding decrease in the number of men employed. The falling-off in the output was mainly attributable to the suspension of crushing operations at the Alexander Mine. On account of ineffective water-supply, the treatment plant was removed from its former position and has been partly re-erected at a more suitable site, remodelling taking place at the same time. The closing-down of the Hercules Mine also helped to reduce the output. Contemplated prospecting-work at the New Big River Mine, if carried into effect, may yield satisfactory results during the coming year. The Britannia Mine is likely to be a producer for the next period, but small crushing-capacities and limited proved quantities of ore will militate against large returns from that holding. No dividends were paid by any of the mines.

Quarries.—In the various quarries in the Canterbury and West Coast Districts work was carried out steadily, some 266 men being employed, as against 274 last year. The value of the output increased from £55,983 to £56,387.

Prospecting.—A good deal of prospecting was carried out, but no great success was met with. Field prospecting gave nothing remarkable in values. Keystone drilling was carried out at Barrytown and Paenga, but, though values were located with several of the holes, the proved areas were not considered large enough to warrant dredges being put on them. An area on the lower Matakiki, Murchison, also had a few drill-holes put down on it, which revealed fair values.