

PROSPECTING.

For the best part of the year very little prospecting was carried out in the district, but about November the decision of the Unemployment Board to allow its allocation under the No. 5 Scheme to be used for prospecting at Thames and Coromandel led to an active revival of the work in these localities. At the end of the year, sixty-six men were employed in and around Thames under the scheme, of whom thirty-one were tributing in the mines and thirty-five carrying out field prospecting in the outer areas. At Coromandel, thirty-four men were engaged, of whom twelve were tributing, mainly on the Hauraki Consolidated claims, and the rest prospecting at Colville, Tokatea, Kennedy Bay, and other places. The tributers in both localities were getting a little gold, but no finds of any important character had so far been made by any of the subsidized men. The only new prospecting find of any importance during the year was that made by J. A. McNeil and Sons on their claims near Austral Hill. The party located a small reef, from which they crushed $13\frac{1}{2}$ tons for a yield of 50 oz. 5 dwt. gold, valued at £154 4s. 9d., equal to £11 8s. 6d. per ton. They also located another gold-bearing formation on their area, but not much work had been done on this. The prospectors under the unemployment scheme are putting in full time and working well, and it is hoped some good finds will result from their efforts.

WEST COAST INSPECTION DISTRICT (E. J. SCOBLE, Inspector of Mines).

QUARTZ-MINING.

Marlborough District.

Dominion Consolidated Mine.—No work of importance has taken place on this company's property for the year, nor does it seem possible that any is likely to again occur unless a new ore body is discovered.

Reefton District.

Blackwater Mine (R. A. Stewart, Manager).—Development work at this mine during the year has taken place as follows:—

Driving: No. 9 level was extended 53 ft. north to the end of the known main ore-body, all on reef over a width of 2 ft. $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., and with values averaging 13.58 dwt. per ton. This drive is to be further advanced when opportunity offers with the object of locating the Prohibition block, which should be some 80 ft. to 90 ft. ahead. No. 10 level north was extended for a distance of 490 ft., of which 441 ft. was advanced on reef over a width of 2 ft. 1 in., with values averaging 11.51 dwt. per ton. The last 250 ft. of reef driven on, though continuous as to length, has not proved so consistent in width and values as the corresponding blocks on the levels above. No. 11 level north was extended for a distance of 820 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft., 751 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. being on reef over a width of 2 ft. 8 in., with values averaging 14.55 dwt. per ton.

Rising: The total amount of rising done for the year amounts to 332 $\frac{3}{4}$ ft., of which 226 ft. exposed reef worth 16.43 dwt. per ton over an average width of 2 ft. 2 in. The rising work referred to includes operations incidental to connecting No. 7 level (Blackwater Mine), with the bottom of the Prohibition shaft. This rise has 10 ft. to go, and it is intended to later connect same with the bottom of the shaft named and afterwards strip downwards accordingly.

Winzing: The total amount of winzing carried out for the year amounted to 548 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft., of which 434 $\frac{3}{4}$ ft. were on reef averaging 12.68 dwt. per ton in value over a width of 2 ft. 4 in. Crosscutting—in all amounted to 150 ft. The total footage of driving amounted to 1,884 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft., of which 1,329 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. were on reef averaging 13.85 dwt. per ton over a width of 2 ft. 4 in. Sump-cutting amounted to 33 ft.

Prospecting South of Snowy River: In consequence of the discovery of a reef (by Messrs. Harrison and Absalom) at Quartz Creek, on the south side of the Snowy River, and on which reef two levels had been driven for a considerable distance on stone averaging 3 ft. in thickness, by the men named, it was deemed advisable to reopen an old adjoining adit situate on the Blackwater Co.'s property in Quartz Creek, as the work done by Messrs. Harrison and Absalom indicates that their reef, if same maintains its present underlie, must pass within the random of the adit mentioned and into the Blackwater Co.'s holding. The adit described exposed ore up to 1 ft. 6 in. in width for the first 40 ft., where it was cut out with a fault. Driving was carried out for a distance of 359 ft., measured from the portal, and of this work some 200 ft. were on reef-track and the remainder in country rock. Operations are being continued.

Reduction works: The battery crushed 43,815 tons of ore for a yield of 21,188 oz. 1 dwt. of gold, of which 17,098 oz. 12 dwt. were obtained by amalgamation, 2,511 oz. 7 dwt. by cyanidation, and 1,578 oz. 2 dwt. by the treatment of concentrates, the value of the whole recovery being £99,792 6s. 1d. These figures show an increase in the tonnage treated, and also in the ratio of recovery therefrom, when compared with last year's operations, which may be considered as highly gratifying. The total yield of gold since commencing work amounts to 440,080 oz., valued at £1,760,328 3s. 7d. The major portion of the stoping work carried out during the year has been confined to Nos. 10 and 11 levels, all in a northerly direction. An average of 160 men was employed throughout the year.

Alexander Mine (J. Bolitho, Manager).—Development operations at this mine were confined exclusively to the Mullocky Creek section during the first nine months of the year, but were then wholly transferred to the McVicar block, or Bull Creek section, on account of additional and payable stone being found in that area. **McKay adit:** A level was started on what is known as the McKay block, outcropping on the western side of Mullocky Creek. This level was advanced 72 ft. on stone averaging 1 ft. 9 in. in width, and with values at £3 19s. per ton. All reef-matter cut out at the point mentioned, and driving was therefore discontinued. **Intermediate north of No. 1 winze (McKay's):** This level, situate 32 ft. below the outcrop, was advanced 23 ft., all on stone intermixed with country rock over an average width of 3 ft., with values at £1 11s. 1d. per ton. **Winze off Intermediate:** This was started 14 ft. north and sunk to a depth of 30 ft., all on stone averaging 2 ft. 3 in. in width, with values at £3 5s. per ton. A connection was made with the bottom of the winze by rising 5 ft. from the back of the north-west crosscut driven below. **North-west crosscut:** This crosscut was started at a point 80 ft. from the entrance to the McKay crosscut, and driven north-westerly a distance of 60 ft., where a reef giving values of £2 1s. 9d. per ton over an average width of 2 ft. was intercepted. **North drive off north-west crosscut:** The lode here was driven on for 35 ft., where the stone gave out, leaving only a small reef-track carrying low values. The lode was valued at £2 15s. 10d. per ton over a width of 2 ft. 3 in. A winze sunk on this block, 36 ft. north of the crosscut, reached a depth of 18 ft., where work was suspended owing to the presence of water. The lode is lying at a flat angle, and is very much disturbed at the bottom of the winze; value, £2 3s. 10d. over 2 ft. **South drive off north-west crosscut:** 12 ft. only has been driven here, values being 11s. per ton and the lode averaging 1 ft. in width. **Loftus No. 1 level:** This drive was started on an outcrop known as Loftus reef, which is situate about midway between No. 1 Mullocky Creek level and the McKay crosscut. The lode showing here is probably a continuation of the McKay block, or another lense of stone on the same line of reef. The lode was driven on for 40 ft., when it split into two portions. Driving was continued and followed a mineralized vein a few inches wide for a reasonable distance, with unsatisfactory results. Width of stone 2 ft. 2 in., and value £1 9s. 11d. per ton. Stopping in this section was carried out above McKay crosscut, and all available ore has been extracted therefrom, with the exception of a few tons on the extreme south end of the block. The lode generally was disappointing, gradually