

The detailed study of the vein-bearing rocks of the Reefton district was completed this year, the Alexander River and Kirwan Hill areas being mapped in detail. In the latter the blocks of richly auriferous quartz and the loose quartziferous rubble profitably crushed many years ago is part of the detritus of a huge slip from higher lode country brought down by some severe pre-European earthquake, of which there is abundant other evidence in the region.

Geophysical work also was carried on in the Reefton district north of the Blackwater Mine. Between Merrijigs and Waiuta, along the main run of quartz veins, there is a seven-mile gap in which no profitable lode has yet been found. Moraine and thick terrace gravels cover much of this area, and it is here that geological and geophysical work may be able to direct prospecting to advantage.

Another geophysical party has been at work throughout the season in the Moana district. The sub-surface structure of the petroliferous strata at Kotuku was determined and the depth to solid rock in the gravel-filled valley of the Orangipuku ascertained.

A decided shortage of suitable officers greatly hampered the re-examination of the Greymouth Coalfield. The most valuable coking coals of the Dominion are in this district, and, in view of the essential requirements of the iron-works, closer estimates of the amounts of coal available are necessary.

The Moeraki Subdivision, in eastern Otago, was mapped this year. The district contains coal-seams, which have been worked at Shag Point and Herbert for many years, as well as deposits of limestone largely quarried for cement-making. Sands smelling strongly of oil have lately been rediscovered on the Moeraki Beach, but the geological structure of the district is not favourable to the presence of oil in commercial amount.

The mapping of the Glenorchy Subdivision at the head of Lake Wakatipu was begun. In addition to a considerable amount of gold, the quartz-veins of this district have yielded over 1,200 tons of scheelite concentrates worth more than £160,000.

The geologists at Glenorchy paid a visit to the oil seepages reported two years ago as occurring on the beach between Martin Bay and Milford Sound. The amount of oil escaping from the seepages is very small, and, unfortunately, the geological conditions are distinctly unfavourable.

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

Six scholarships are offered annually by the Department for competition by students attending the various Schools of Mines within the Dominion. Three candidates sat for the annual Scholarship Examinations held in November, 1937, and of these candidates, one from the Thames School was successful in gaining a scholarship, which is tenable for four years at the University of Otago.

The expenditure on Schools of Mines for the year ended 31st March, 1938, was £3,910, as compared with £4,035 for the previous year.

MINERS' PENSIONS.

The Pensions Act, 1926, as amended, provides for payment of pensions to miners seriously and permanently incapacitated by miners' phthisis or totally incapacitated by other occupational disease or heart-disease contracted while mining in New Zealand. The rate of pension for a miner is 25s. a week, with 10s. a week added for his wife, if he is married, and a maximum of 10s. a week for each dependent child under fifteen, subject to a limit of £4 5s. a week for the family.

The widow of a miner who dies while in receipt of a pension is entitled to receive 17s. 6d. a week while she remains a widow.