

Petroleum.—The New Zealand Petroleum Co., Ltd., commenced boring at No Town, Block II, Mawheranui Survey District, and late in the year reached basement rock at a depth of 6,942 ft. before abandoning the hole. At 6,695 ft. a strong flow of sour non-petroleum gas was encountered and sealed off, and boring continued until all possibilities of the discovery of oil were exhausted. The plant was subsequently dismantled and removed from this district and the services of most of the drilling and technical staffs dispensed with by the company.

Pottery Clay.—The clay-pit at Kaka, in Tadmor Survey District, Waimea County, operated by K. A. Polglaze, produced 2,330 tons, which realized at the mine £3,087 5s. The quantity of clay available for present workings is limited to a few hundred tons. Towards the latter part of the year arrangements were made with the Mines Department to prospect an area by diamond drill and thereby, if possible, to ensure a continuous supply of clay to the Temuka pottery, where the raw material is converted into essential earthenware.

In the same district E. Cobbletick produced 50 tons of low-grade clay, which was disposed of at the rate of 17s. 6d. per ton.

Iron-ore.—From the Onakaka district 143 tons of iron-ore, which realized £775, was shipped to various parts of the Dominion.

Talc and Magnesite.—The Takaka Lime and Marble, holders of a mineral license at Upper Takaka, quarried and transported to the works at Mapua 103 tons of talc magnesite, and from the Aniseed Valley 25 tons of talc. The total value of mineral won was £102 14s.

Arsenic.—The amount of 15 tons 15 cwt. of arsenic was produced as a by-product from the treatment of roasted concentrates recovered by the flotation plant during ore treatment from the Blackwater Mine.

GENERAL REMARKS: MINING AND PROSPECTING

Faced by conditions imposed by the war, gold-production continues to shrink. Prospecting of new areas by dredging companies is at a standstill. Development of quartz lodes has received a serious check and restoration of the gold-mining industry to its pre-war state of prosperity will be a difficult task, but can be accomplished when the present abnormal conditions cease to exist.

Seven dredging companies carried out check boring, and drilled sixty-six holes aggregating 3,303½ ft. in depth. No diamond drilling for minerals exploitable under the Mining Act, 1926, was carried out during the year.

FATAL ACCIDENTS

Three fatal accidents occurred during the year—viz., two drowning fatalities at the Barrytown Dredge and one accident at the Pokororo Quarry.

Dredges.—On 22nd August, 1944, William McGrath, aged about twenty-one years, employed as a greaser on Barrytown Dredge, met his death. No witnesses were present at the time of the accident, but it is presumed that he left the dredge at the end of the shift at midnight by the stern instead of the gangway, and in doing so jumped into the soft tailings and was drowned. The body was recovered by dragging operations four days after McGrath was reported missing.

On 14th October, 1944, Edward Price, aged seventeen years, employed as an oiler on the Barrytown Dredge, met his death by drowning in the dredge pond. Deceased had been engaged with a workmate in loading stumps on to a punt. The latter left to oil the jigs, and on his return about ten minutes later there was no sign of Price. Dragging operations were carried out, and the body was subsequently recovered from the pond. It is presumed that Price had gone to unhook a stump on the punt and accidentally slipped into the dredge pond.

Quarries.—On 21st September, 1944, Orman Parkes, quarry manager, Pokororo Quarry, Motueka, sustained cerebral concussion and a crushed chest when he was struck by a fall of rock from the face of the quarry immediately above the spot where he was working. Death occurred shortly after the injuries were sustained.

SERIOUS NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS

One serious non-fatal accident occurred during the year.

On 11th March, 1944, John Burrell, a member of the workshop staff, Atarau Dredge, while engaged clearing a discarded bowline in front of the dredge sustained broken ribs. The shore gang were endeavouring to pull the line clear from the front of the dredge with the tractor and it fouled on a tree stump, striking Burrell before he had time to move.

PROSECUTIONS UNDER THE MINING ACT

Nil.

SOUTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (T. McMILLAN, Inspector of Mines)

QUARTZ AND ALLUVIAL MINING

Waitaki County

Sluicing operations were carried out in the auriferous gravels of the Livingstone and Macrewhenua Goldfields.

Waihemo County

All operations have ceased in the Deep Dell Mine of the Golden Point Gold and Scheelite Mining Co., and the plant is to be sold.

The Lewis co-operative party continued to prospect the Deep Lead gravels for float scheelite, they then decided to install a sluicing plant in order to sluice off the overburden and work the scheelite-bearing gravels by ground-sluicing methods. As gravity water could not be obtained, the Golden Point generating plant was rented, and also pumping plant from the Macrae's Flat Gold-mining Co. This method proved to be too expensive, for the scheelite content was low, and operations ceased in September.

Gallery Party, Deep Dell, Macrae's.—Prospecting, driving, sinking, rising, and stoping operations were carried out on both sides of Round Hill, and 275 tons of ore were treated at the Deep Dell Battery during the year.

Innes Freehold Mine.—Mining operations were carried on until the end of March, when on account of heavy rains the workings became flooded and operations ceased.

The Macrae's Flat Gold-mining Co.—The electrically operated gravel-pump continued to operate in the upper section of the Macrae's Flat where the main reefing system crosses the flat. As this system has apparently been the main source of the gold and scheelite content of the alluvial gravels on this flat, the auriferous content of the gravels became too low for profitable operations. Mining operations ceased in July, and the plant was then dismantled and sold for removal.

Maniototo County

The alluvial mines at Naseby, Kyeburn, St. Bathans, Cambrians, Vinegar Hill, and Patearoa operated steadily whenever water was available.

Tuapeka County

Mining operations were carried on steadily at the Sailor's Gully tribute mine, Waitahuna, by J. Hore and party. The Blue Spur and Gabriel's Gully party continued to operate in Lagoon Gully near the head of Gabriel's Gully.

Southland County

Sluicing operations have been carried out in the Waikaia and Nokomai auriferous areas.