

in Otago and seventeen in Southland, owned by working shareholders or small syndicates. Many of these are highly successful, while others are able to work to advantage claims which yield a small profit over working-expenses.

Owing to the unfavourable state of the Clutha (or Molyneux) River during the past season, the several dredges operating in the gorge portions were unable to work for more than a few weeks.

A few improvements have been made in connection with working dredges. The Rising Sun, Duke of Gordon, and Koputai dredges are now fitted with shaking-boxes of different types, in lieu of the revolving screen. It is claimed for these boxes that with a minimum wear-and-tear the material is better treated and a greater percentage of the gold is saved.

Considerable attention was given during the year to the assay of black and grey sands associated with the gold-bearing gravels. A number of small assays were made, but the results obtained lacked the reliability which would have marked the treatment of bulk samples of these sands, which are recovered in various degrees of concentration.

The application of water-power to dredges, though proved to be advantageous where used, has not made much progress during the year. Eight dredges are now provided with this power, and two more are being equipped with the necessary machinery. The question of the reduction of working-costs with regard to motive power is now entering largely into the question of working many areas of low-grade gravels.

A sufficient number of kerosene lamps are used upon the majority of dredges for working at night-time, while a number are equipped with electric-lighting or acetylene-gas plants.

ACCIDENTS: GOLD-DREDGES.

Fatal.

11/1/1906: David Anderson, winchman, Morning Light dredge, Cromwell, was drowned in the Clutha River by falling from the bow side line, upon which he attempted to go ashore from the dredge.

27/2/1906: Robert A. Williamson, winchman, Lone Star dredge, Cardrona, accidentally killed by a section of the broken crown wheel falling on him from above.

4/4/1906: Joseph Burgeois, winchman, Waikaka dredge, Waikaka, drowned in dredge paddock; jumped from coal-punt into paddock while in a state of excitement.

14/5/1906: Walter P. Stevens, winchman, Alpine No. 2 dredge, Lowburn, accidentally drowned while engaged coaling; a portion of the bank above water-level fell on the coal-boat, and Stevens was taken down with it.

Non-fatal.

5/3/1906: J. B. Morgan, blacksmith's assistant, Earnsleugh dredge, Alexandra, received a stroke on eye by a piece of steel, necessitating removal of the eye.

OTHER MINERALS.

AURIFEROUS IRONSANDS.

Although extensive deposits of these sands exist in the south and south-west coasts of New Zealand, operations are principally confined to the Orepuki Beach, where about twelve men find employment when the tides are favourable.

Other localities worked more or less intermittently are at Fortrose, Waikawa, the beach stretching between Clutha and Tokomairiro Rivers, and Kartigi Beach, North Otago.

The want of a suitable appliance to treat these sands wholesale is severely felt, as only a small percentage of the values is obtained by the present system of plate amalgamation. The hydraulic-elevating plant at Orepuki Beach (an adaptation of the Charleston set of tables) appears to be doing satisfactory work.

Platinum.

The usual percentage has been recovered in conjunction with the gold won from the Round Hill Gold-mining Company's sluicing claim at Round Hill, Southland.

The beachcombers at Orepuki also save a small quantity of this mineral.

Platinum is found associated with gold in the black-sand deposits on the beaches of the south and south-west coasts of Otago.

COPPER.

Owing to the high price ruling for this mineral, considerable attention is being devoted to the known deposits.

Some attention has been given to the Moke Creek lode by a syndicate.

The claim at Reedy Creek has recently been applied for, and four men are employed in reopening the mine.

ANTIMONY.

Quite a revival may be said to have taken place in antimony-mining—a condition induced by the high market prices ruling.

Alexandra Antimony-mine (Alexandra Antimony-mining Company, Limited).—This mine was closed down for five years, but has been reopened by James McQueen and party. This property is now advantageously situated, being within one mile of the Alexandra Railway-station. The absence of cheap communication with the sea-board has hitherto retarded the working of many quartz reefs and mineral lodes in Central Otago. Charles Rillstone has been appointed mine-manager of the Alexandra Mine,