

German Gully.—Traversi and party have driven their subsidised tunnel 188 ft. The indications so far met are not favourable for gold.

McLeod's Terrace.—This company went into liquidation during the year. The claim was taken over by McLeod Bros. and worked for a short time, but is now at a standstill.

SOUTH WESTLAND.

Waiho.—A company owning mining privileges at the Five-mile Beach, Okarito, has acquired the Westland Hydraulic and Dredging Company's water-rights and plant. A scheme is being formulated to generate electrical power and transmit it to the Five-mile Beach, where it will be utilised for elevating the auriferous sands.

Omawa.—During favourable seasons several parties make a living-wage.

Waikupuku.—Messrs. Gibbs and party are engaged in collecting and treating the auriferous black sands. A few beachcombers still continue to labour, with varying results. The success of their operations depend on the action of the tides in depositing layers of auriferous sand.

DREDGING.

The total number of working dredges in the Nelson and Westland districts at the 31st December was twenty-three, a decrease of two during the year. The value of gold won, £75,670 1s. 8d., when compared with the return for 1907 shows a decrease of £6 0s. 10d. No new dredges have been built during the year, whilst those that ceased operations have been dismantled. Indications of improvement in the industry at the present time are practically nil.

OTHER MINERALS.

COPPER.

Maoriland Copper Company.—Operations during the year were directed principally to the erection of a small reverberatory smelting-furnace, and connecting same with the Champion and United sections of the mine, the latter work necessitating the construction of three miles and a half of wooden tramway. In the Champion section the north shaft was unwatered and a winze sunk 78 ft. below the 150 ft. level, disclosing a lode from 2 ft. to 3 ft. in width, carrying a good percentage of native copper and pyrrhotite. In the United section development-work comprised driving and rising on the lode, which in this section is small and irregular. The results of smelting operations did not prove satisfactory, and at date of visit (25th November, 1908) all work was suspended with the exception of baling the north shaft. While the smelter was working, 11 tons 5 cwt. of copper matte and 1 ton 12 cwt. of copper, valued at £290, was produced.

Mount Radiant.—All work on this field has been suspended. Efforts are being made to raise capital to develop several of the properties.

ANTIMONY.

Owing to the low market value of the metal, antimony-mining has been practically at a standstill during the year.

IRON.

Parapara Iron Lease.—During the early part of the year this property was protected. Since July an average of seventeen men have been employed chiefly on surface-works, comprising the construction of roads and open cuttings. No systematic development-work to determine the extent and value of these ore-deposits has yet been undertaken.

OIL.

Oil-boring Operations at Kotuku.—In connection with these borings work of considerable perseverance and magnitude has been encountered with a full determination to success, providing the field will afford such. Transit of material is amply provided by a substantially built tram-line, while living accommodation and storage-sheds for material have not been neglected. Boring is performed by a simple machine actuated by oil-engine, capable of boring to depths of 700 ft. to 800 ft., with two attendants. On the 7th December, 1908, when the borehole then in progress had attained a depth of 411 ft., large volumes of gas under excessively high pressure were encountered, causing a continuous discharge of salt water to a height of probably 80 ft., and compelling the abandonment of the borehole. Boring is, however, recommenced about 100 yards to the westward. The weekly output as taken from the several producing boreholes amounts to two barrels—viz., 80 gallons. Mr. Taylor, who is conducting the operations, is very sanguine on the venture and seemingly determined to prove the oil-bearing values of this peculiar district.

ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES.

QUARTZ-MINES.

Fatal.

Progress Mines.—30/5/08: Michael Goodwin was killed by fall of quartz while engaged in working out loose ground from a discharged shot.

Non-fatal.

Progress Mines.—2/7/08: F. Crockford sustained a broken shin-bone by a slab of slate falling and rolling on his leg while renewing timber.