

## DEPARTMENTAL.

During the present year considerable changes have taken place in the Mines Department owing to retirement, the age-limit having been reached by several officers—viz., Mr. Alexander McKay, F.G.S., Government Geologist; Mr. H. A. Gordon, F.G.S., M.I.M.E., Consulting Engineer of State Collieries; and Mr. Robert Tennent, Inspector of Mines for the West Coast District. Mr. T. H. Hamer, Under-Secretary of Mines, having been appointed to a post in the High Commissioner's Office in London, the Under-Secretaryship of Mines has been conferred upon Mr. H. J. H. Blow, Under-Secretary of Public Works, who now combines the dual duties of Under-Secretary of both Departments.

The only new appointment to the Mines Department is that of Mr. A. G. Marshall, who has succeeded Mr. R. Tennent on the West Coast as Inspector of Mines.

## CONCLUSION.

After carefully reviewing the results of mining operations in the Dominion during the past year and considering the prospects of the industry in the immediate future, I am pleased to inform honourable members that while mining has been in a very satisfactory position for the last twelve months, the indications for the period that will be covered by the next Mines Statement are exceedingly promising, and I anticipate considerable extension in both the gold- and coal-mining branches of the industry.

The new collieries now being opened up will soon be adding considerably to our coal-output, and an increased export trade will require to be developed to keep the larger mines at work up to something approaching their full capacity.

The prospects of quartz-mining throughout the Dominion are encouraging. As a result of improvements that are being made in mining machinery and in the processes for the treatment of ores, together with the investment of additional capital and the opening-up of new mines, an increased yield from this important section of the gold-mining industry may be expected.

Although the returns from dredging are on the decline, I am of opinion that there will be an increased production from alluvial mining, owing to the fact that more attention is being given to hydraulic sluicing and elevating, than has been the case for some years past, on the West Coast and Otago fields.

In conclusion, I may say that in view of the position disclosed by the figures I have quoted for the information of honourable members, and the developments that are now taking place, the prospects of our mining industry may be considered eminently satisfactory.

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