

The decrease of fatal accidents during 1911 is very gratifying, and may to some extent be reasonably attributed to greater vigilance as the result of the investigations of the Royal Commission on Mines, which visited all the most important of the mining centres, where inspections were made and voluminous evidence was taken.

Among the most important of the additional precautionary measures recommended by the Commission in their report are the following: The maximum height of stopes shall be $8\frac{1}{2}$ ft., measured from the working-floor. Sufficient space shall be made in all levels, at convenient intervals, to protect men from trucks. Chambermen and bracedmen shall be always at their posts, but chambermen are not compulsory at each level. All ladders in mines shall extend for at least 3 ft. above the top of the shaft, platform, or landing-place. Two outlets from a mine to the surface shall be maintained, except under certain specified conditions. Shift bosses shall examine backs and sides, irrespective of the examination by miners. No tamping other than plastic clay or water shall be allowed. Where rock-drills are installed, a James or other water-blast or atomizer shall be used to allay smoke and dust caused by blasting. No greater number of holes shall be charged than it is intended to explode at one time. Pent-houses shall be provided in sinking-shafts. No person shall carry tools or timber in a ladder-way or throw the same down any ladder-way. Explosives shall not be carried with men in cages. All winding-engine drivers shall be medically examined annually. In addition to the tests and examinations at present provided for, all safety appliances used on or in connection with cages shall be examined and tested quarterly by a mechanical expert, and the result entered in a special report-book. Every winding-rope shall be recapped at intervals of not more than six months. No machinery about a dredge shall be oiled, repaired, or adjusted when in motion, except those parts which cannot be so attended to except when in motion. No person engaged near to dredge or other mining machinery shall wear loose outer clothing. All mine windlasses shall be fitted with pawls and ratchet wheels.

IV. GOLD-MINES.

The following statement shows the value of the bullion-production and dividends declared, also the number of persons ordinarily employed, and number of gold-mines and dredges working during the year:—

	Production of Bullion, 1911.* (All mines.)	Dividends paid, 1911. (By registered companies only.)	Number of Persons ordinarily employed.	Number of Working Mines, Dredges, and Claims.
Quartz-mining ...	£ 1,375,253	£ 451,969	4,138	156
Dredge mining ...	297,900†	45,318†	775	93
Alluvial mining ...	275,216‡	7,508‡	2,452	277
Totals, 1911 ...	1,948,369	504,795	7,365	526
Totals, 1910 ...	2,067,890	610,866	8,081	555

* In addition to the gold produced from the gold-mines, silver was obtained from them, hence the word "bullion" is used in preference to "gold."

† The bullion production is from 93 dredges, but the dividends given are only from 31 of these, the property of registered companies. The profits of privately owned dredges and mines are unobtainable, which renders this statement incomplete.

‡ The bullion-production is from 277 alluvial claims, but the dividends are only ascertainable from those that are the property of registered companies.

The production from the gold-mines of New Zealand, in common with those of all the States of Australia, continues to decrease.

From the foregoing table it will be seen that there has been a decline of £119,521 in the value of the bullion-production from our gold-mines, such decline being confined to quartz and dredge mines. The alluvial mines, owing to the exceptional rainfall, have been able to work for a longer period than usual, and, as a result, there has been a considerable increase in their gold-production.

The decline in dividends, amounting to £106,071, may be attributed solely to the Waihi Mine, from which the dividends during 1911 were £123,978 below those of the previous year.

(1.) QUARTZ-MINING.

The production of bullion from the quartz-mines of the Dominion during 1911 amounted in value to £1,375,253, as the result of treating 645,991 tons of ore, being a decline in both tonnage and value when compared with the production during the previous year; there has been, however, a slight increase in the average yield per ton of ore reduced.