

*Taranaki Oil Lands Acquisition and Development Company.* The Blenheim bore has now attained a depth of 5,021 ft., and it is alleged that a main deposit of oil should be met with shortly. During the past year the company drilled 370 ft., but owing to constant difficulties through the drilling-cable breaking drilling was abandoned in July, pending the arrival of a new rope from London. The company estimates that 10,000 gallons of crude oil was yielded during 1917.

*Consolidated Oilfields of Taranaki.* Huiroa bore: The depth of this well is 4,921 ft. At 4,900 ft. the bottom length of casing became detached, owing to wearing by tools. The strata is of incohesive nature, necessitating the casing being kept within a few feet of the bottom. Operations are at present suspended.

#### *Fatal Accidents.*

22nd February: William Edward Crompton was killed by falling out of cage at the Waihi Grand Junction Mine.

18th April: William John Ward was killed by being caught in belting at Bull's battery, Thames.

13th July: James McConnell was killed by a blasting accident at Waihi Grand Junction Mine.

11th September: Peter Lincir was killed by being caught in the machinery at the Waihi-Paeroa Gold-extraction Company's works, Paeroa.

17th October: John McPherson was killed by fall of stone at Waihi Mine.

#### *Non-fatal Accidents.*

2nd April: Albert Toto, skull fractured by being struck with winch-handle whilst working on river-dredge of the Waihi-Paeroa Gold-extraction Company's works.

3rd October: Edward Meagher, back injured by falling down a pass at the New Zealand Crown Mines, Karangahake.

20th October: Mark Ryan, back injured by being struck with bucket whilst sinking a winze in the Waihi Grand Junction Mine.

#### NORTH AUCKLAND INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. BOYD BENNIE, Inspector of Mines).

*Whangarei Cinnabar-mining Company.*—The mine has been working for some years, and a number of prospecting-shafts have been sunk to depths varying from 30 ft. to 40 ft. This was a useless expenditure of capital, as the ore-body was outcropping on the hillside close to where the present adit level was driven on the lode, which is dipping north-west 1 in 10. The adit has been driven 163 ft., the lode being from 3 ft. to 5 ft. wide. The hanging-wall is well defined, but not so the foot-wall, and in places the lode is a segregation of ore. Crosscuts on the lode have been driven north-east and south-west 59 ft. and 49 ft. respectively, and from the crosscuts stoping on the lode is being done, the lode being 3 ft. wide.

I have had several samples of the ore assayed as follows: Assayed at Thames School of Mines, 21st March, 1914: Sample No. 1—5.1 per cent. of mercury, valued at 2s. 3d. per pound; average value per ton of ore, £12 17s.; sample No. 2—1 per cent. of mercury at similar value; average value per ton of ore, £2 10s. 4d.; making an average value per ton of £7 13s. 8d. Five samples forwarded to the Dominion Laboratory, Wellington, in September, 1916, gave mercury as follows:—No. 1, 6.26 per cent.; No. 2, 0.78 per cent.; No. 3, 2.73 per cent.; No. 4, 2.77 per cent.; No. 5, 4.60 per cent.—which is very satisfactory.

I believe there are 3,000 tons of ore ready to be stoped, and the main-drive face is in the ore-body. Seven miners are employed in the mine, three men on the surface, and two men burning charcoal, making a total of twelve men.

The company have erected a furnace at their mine, where two trial parcels of ore were treated as follows:—

(1.) 1917. 68 tons of ore gave mercury valued at £375; 1,500 lb. of mercury sold at 5s. per pound, f.o.b. Auckland, to Messrs. Elliot Bros., of Sydney, N.S.W.

(2.) 1918. 130 tons of ore gave mercury valued at £918 15s; 35 bottles, 75 lb. each, of mercury—2,625 lb.—sold at 7s. per pound, f.o.b. Auckland, to S. V. Nevans Proprietary Company, Auckland.

The prices quoted for the mercury are subject to revision, being the estimated value advanced by the purchaser.

The treatment plant is distant from the mine approximately 400 yards, being connected by a ground-tram. The property appears to be a valuable one, and with careful treatment of the ore should pay reasonable dividends on the capital invested. There has been some trouble with the pastoral-lease holders, through the dual control by the Warden and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who granted pastoral lease over the mining claim at 6d. to 8d. per acre per annum, while the claim-holders pay 2s. 6d. per acre per annum for the same area.

*McLeod Bros.' Alluvial Cinnabar Claim.*—Two men have been employed in preparing water-race, dam, &c., to work this deposit. The prospects are very good, granulated cinnabar-ore being recovered from the soil and gravel of an upland swamp. Some samples were assayed and found to be very rich. The area may contain a considerable quantity of valuable ore.

*Joffe Mine (Collins Bros. and Co.)*—The claim is adjacent to Messrs. McLeod Bros.' claim. There is a cinnabar-ore deposit outcropping on the slope of a valley, and the deposit appears to be lying almost horizontally. Some feet below the outcropping ore-deposit an adit level has been driven for 50 ft., but had not then cut into the ore lode, and the work done gave no indication as to the value or extent of the ore lode. Two men are employed. No other work has been done on the claim.

*General.*—Although there are several claims held for mining cinnabar in the vicinity, none of the holders have done any work to prove the value of their claims. The Whangarei Cinnabar-mining Company only have systematically prospected their property.