

WEST COAST INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. J. F. DOWNEY, Inspector of Mines).

Quartz-mining.

MARLBOROUGH.

Dominion Consolidated Mining and Development Company (Limited).—The number of men employed throughout the year averaged thirty as against fifty last year, and 8,443 tons of quartz was crushed, against 11,973 tons in 1918; consequently there was a considerable falling-off in values recovered. The decision of the Department of Imperial Supplies not to make any further purchases of scheelite has left the whole year's production, amounting to 21 tons 1 quarter, on the company's hands. A little development in the way of driving and rising was done, without disclosing any material change in grade of ore.

Alford and Party (Mountain Camp).—A little development work was done, and some parts of a treatment plant purchased and delivered at the foot of the Mine Hill.

Cadigan's Treatment-works.—Work was still further delayed by litigation with a neighbouring claimholder, but 11 tons of scheelite was recovered. Only 5 tons was, however, disposed of at the rate of £150 per ton.

NELSON.

Colossus Gold-mining Development Company.—A little driving was done by this company on its Blue Creek claim at Wangapeka, but no improved values were discovered.

LYELL.

New Alpine Consols Company.—The driving of the low-level tunnel on the line of the reef has been continued. This was advanced to the end of the year a total distance of 828 ft. Beyond the shoot of stone struck at 70 ft. from the crosscut nothing of any value has been met with.

New Creek Prospecting and Developing Company.—This company was formed during the year to reopen the old Victory Mine. An adit is being driven to intersect the reef about 200 ft. below the old workings. Six men are employed.

CAPLESTON.

Boatman's Consolidated Gold-mines (Limited).—A considerable amount of driving and cross-cutting was done on the 1,000 ft. level of the Fiery Cross shaft in the hope of picking up the downward continuation of the Waihalla or Just-in-Time shoots. No success was, however, met with. The company now intends to do some prospecting from the 450 ft. level.

REEFTON.

Blackwater Mine.—A good deal of development work was carried out. The sinking of the main shaft another 300 ft. below No. 8 level was taken in hand, and is rapidly approaching completion. A chamber was opened out for No. 9 level, but no work was done from it, the company's intention being to get down and open out No. 10 level chamber, and develop the two levels simultaneously. A good deal of driving was also done in Nos. 6, 7, and 8 levels, particularly to the south, where the developments in all three levels were very encouraging. The two former levels have now been extended south about 1,050 ft., and No. 8 level 960 ft. in the same direction, all on fair-class stone. No dividends were paid during the year. Practically the same number of men was employed as during 1918. The quantity crushed decreased, however, from 31,728 tons to 24,969 tons.

Blackwater South Mine.—This mine has been idle throughout the year, but a new company has now been registered for working it, and during the coming year operations will be actively resumed.

Keep-it-Dark Mine.—No crushing was done at this mine during the year, work being entirely confined to shaft and level repairs and development. A certain amount of driving was done on Nos. 4, 7, and 8 levels. A winze on No. 6 level was also continued a few feet farther, and one started on No. 9 level. In these two winzes stone said to be of fair value is showing, but what quantity of it there is in either case cannot be estimated.

Murray Creek Mine.—As the working of this mine under existing conditions was not profitable the company ceased operations about the end of May. Up to that time 4,512 tons had been put through for a return of gold valued at £9,975. The company is considering a scheme for shifting the treatment plant from its present site to one on the Waitahu River where water is available for power purposes. It is considered that the change from the present steam-power to water-power would effect a considerable saving in treatment-costs, and enable the company to show a profit. The only development done was about 100 ft. driving south on No. 4 level.

New Big River Mine.—This mine had the same number of men employed as during 1918, but was nevertheless very short-handed, only one shift being worked. A slightly increased tonnage of quartz was crushed, but the total values recovered were not so good, showing a decrease from £3 7s. 11d. to £3 2s. per ton. Practically no development was done. All the ore came from between the two bottom levels, Nos. 10 and 11. One dividend, absorbing £2,400, was paid.

North Big River Mine.—A company has been recently formed to work this property, which up to the present has only been tested by two short prospecting-drives. A number of reefs out-crop, but the value of any of them at present is problematic. Good values are said to have been got at a shallow level in one of the reefs on which the drives mentioned have been carried in.

Big River South.—A syndicate has been carrying out prospecting operations on this claim during the year. A small gold-bearing reef was located and driven on for about 100 ft.