

GOLD AND SILVER MINING.

The following statement shows the quantity and value of bullion-production, the dividends paid by registered companies, and the number of productive claims and gold-dredges during 1924 and 1923 :—

Class of Gold-mining.	Production of Bullion.				Dividends paid by Registered Companies.		Number of Productive Claims and Dredges.	
	1924.		1923.		1924.	1923.	1924.	1923.
	Oz.	£	Oz.	£	£	£		
Quartz	625,162	490,850	661,468	609,993	50,790	24,795	23	22
Alluvial	14,357	57,863	14,834	59,174	6,180	2,266	273	130
Dredging	13,336	58,540	15,788	68,003	6,566	3,283	5	8
Totals	652,855	607,253	692,090	737,170	63,536	30,344	301	160

The quantity of gold bullion produced during the year was 39,235 oz. less than in the previous year, and the value less by £129,917. This reduction was principally due to the diminished returns from quartz-mining in Waihi Borough and Tauranga County, though decreases were also shown in the gold got from dredging and from alluvial mining.

KAWARAU FALLS DAM.

During the year the Kawarau Gold-mining Company (Limited) made a commencement with the damming of Lake Wakatipu. That work is to be effected by means of ten stony sluice-gates, each having an effective waterway 40 ft. in width by 7 ft. 6 in. in height, and each being supported at its end by massive concrete pillars, of which there are eleven, including the abutments. The object of this work is to keep back the water in Lake Wakatipu during certain months of the year, and thus enable mining operations to be carried out as far as possible in the Kawarau River. It must not be overlooked that the erection of the gates referred to will not lay bare the bed of the Kawarau River, as there are other streams and rivers from which water flows into the Kawarau River. The company has, it is understood, arranged to sublease, under tribute agreements, portions of the mining rights held by it in the Kawarau River. Substantial sums of money have been raised by the subsidiary companies for the purpose of carrying on mining operations in the river. It is, in my opinion, a matter for serious consideration by all those concerned to meet one another, before the gates are closed, for the purpose of devising and carrying out systematic mining operations, so that the most beneficial results may be obtained. I am sorry to say that misleading statements have been made in some of the prospectuses which have been issued by the promoters of several subsidiary companies in Australia. It was stated that the Kawarau Gold-mining Company (Limited) had obtained a license from the New Zealand Mines Department, issued by the Warden at Queenstown and sanctioned by the Minister of Mines, to dam Lake Wakatipu, which statement is not correct. The dam license was issued at the discretion of the Warden under the statutory powers conferred upon him, and the license did not require my consent or sanction as stated in the prospectus. It was also stated that the company's undertaking had for its purpose the shutting-off of Lake Wakatipu from the Kawarau River to lay bare the bed of the river. This statement is greatly exaggerated, as the damming of Lake Wakatipu could not by any stretch of imagination lay bare the bed of the river, for the reasons already mentioned above.

It was also stated in prominent lettering that the scheme had been hall-marked by the New Zealand Government, which statement is also contrary to fact. The New Zealand Government has not in any way guaranteed the success of the scheme, and, although it wishes those who are finding the money every success, and would be glad to see their efforts amply rewarded, it cannot in any way take any responsibility therefor.