

picked it up and, climbing down the level, walked about 10 ft., where he stooped down to pick up some tools with his right hand, the candle and the detonator being in his left hand. There was no fuse attached to this detonator, nor can Mannix explain how the accident occurred; but it is quite evident that, unknown to him, his candle must have come in contact with the detonator, which exploded and blew off two fingers. Apart from this and shock he was not seriously injured.

WEST COAST INSPECTION DISTRICT (J. F. DOWNEY, INSPECTOR OF MINES).

Quartz-mining.

MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT.

*Dominion Consolidated Mine.*—Operations at this mine were carried on regularly during the year, but not by the original company. For portion of the time a syndicate, representing, I understand, the debenture-holders, made an effort, by introducing shrinkage stoping and making various improvements to the mine and plant, to work the mine profitably. It was found, however, that the values in ore were too low to admit of this, and the syndicate ceased work. A tribute party, headed by A. Brough, then took the mine over and worked it for several months with evidently no better results. Finally, towards the end of the year the property was taken over by Thomas Harrison, and another small tribute party formed by him is now making an endeavour in the same direction. During the year some 3,615 tons of quartz were crushed under the various managements, which yielded 787 oz. 10 dwt. 17 gr. of gold, valued at £2,857 3s. 10d. This yield would be equal to a recovery of a little over 4 dwt. per ton. All of the stone came from stopes over No. 2 level, Golden Bar section.

REEFTON DISTRICT.

*Blackwater Mine.*—During the year this mine was worked continuously, an average of 144 men being employed. Less development-work was carried out than in 1924, the total being only 1,037 ft. Of this, however, 629½ ft. were on reef averaging 15·92 dwt. over 24·8 in. This footage was made up of 353 ft. of driving, 366 ft. of rising, 293½ ft. of winzing, and 24½ ft. of crosscutting. The following are the details of the work:—

No. 6 level north extended 7 ft. in blank; No. 8 level intermediate drive north from rise 900 ft. south, 22 ft. in blank; No. 9 level north, 93 ft., 27½ ft. of which was on reef averaging 8·34 dwt. over 23 in., 65½ ft. being in blank; No. 10 level north, 198½ ft., all on reef averaging 15·52 dwt. over 32·7 in.; No. 10 level south, 32½ ft., of which 25 ft. were on reef averaging 24·8 dwt. over 23 in., 7½ ft. being in blank.

No. 8 level, rise 1,670 ft. north, 61 ft., 19 ft. being on reef averaging 23·97 dwt. over 23 in.; No. 8 level, rise 900 ft. south, 58 ft., 47 ft. being on reef averaging 14·77 dwt. over 13 in.; No. 9 level, rise 1,180 ft. north, 82 ft., 54 ft. being on reef averaging 15·8 dwt. over 22 in.; No. 10 level, rise 360 ft. south, 81½ ft., all on reef averaging 28 dwt. over 20 in.; No. 10 level, rise 700 ft. north, 83½ ft., all on reef averaging 11·2 dwt. over 26 in.

No. 7 level, winze 1,470 ft. north, 7½ ft. in blank; No. 7 level, winze 1,670 ft. north, 69½ ft., 15 ft. on reef averaging 3·74 dwt. over 20 in.; No. 9 level, winze 440 ft. north, 76½ ft., all in blank; No. 9 level, winze 360 ft. south, 74 ft., 30½ ft. of which was on reef averaging 15·02 dwt. over 19 in.; No. 9 level, winze 700 ft. north, 66 ft., 48 ft. on reef averaging 7·83 dwt. over 17 in.; all these winzes were holed through to corresponding rises.

No. 10 level, crosscut off rise 360 ft. south, 6 ft. in blank; No. 7 level, crosscut from rise 1,670 ft. north, 10½ ft. in blank; No. 9 level, crosscut from winze 440 ft. north, 8 ft. in blank.

During the year 37,939 tons of quartz were crushed and treated, for a recovery of 18,603 oz. 16 dwt. gold, valued at £74,423 5s. 9d., of which amount 16,224 oz. 3 dwt. were won by amalgamation, 2,354 oz. 3 dwt. by cyanidation, and 25 oz. 10 dwt. by roasting and treatment of concentrates. Adjustment of old account with an Australian smelting company added a further £492 2s., making the total revenue for the period £74,915 7s. 9d. Both the quantity crushed and the values recovered showed a small falling-off on the figures for the previous year.

Towards the end of the year the new Edward's roasting plant for the treatment of accumulated and current concentrates was completed, and an experimental run served to show that this addition to the plant promised to be a decided success. A considerable quantity of concentrates is on hand which at the present high shipping and treatment rates is scarcely rich enough in gold to dispatch overseas, but which, treated on the spot, will now yield a good profit to the company.

After an interval of some years the mine became again a dividend-payer, £12,499 12s. being distributed, making the total dividends paid to date by the company £187,493 2s.

For the year 144 men in the average were employed.

*North Blackwater Mine.*—This mine has been idle for the full year, the company evidently not having been able to raise the further capital necessary to enable it to resume active mining operations. Negotiations for the sale of the property are now, I understand, in progress.

*Murray Creek Mine.*—In the early part of the year this mine was taken over on tribute by a party of four miners, headed by George Krommer. From a point in a rise near the extreme north end of No. 2 (battery) level, and a short distance below the old No. 1 (surface) level, this party took out a parcel of 124 tons of quartz which on treatment gave a return of 101 oz. 17 dwt. gold, valued at £372 8s. 9d. This stone was evidently a remnant of a shoot which was worked years ago from a winze put down from the surface level. Two other shoots were known to be underfoot on this same level, but owing to the fact that there was at the time no convenient means of getting this stone out no work was done there. The tribute party is now, with the aid of Government subsidy, repairing 200 ft. of the rise mentioned, and intends sinking on these shoots and, if they prove worth the work, to extend an intermediate level to them from the rise. The party also did a considerable amount of work in trying to find the upward continuance of the shoot near the old "30 ft. block," to which reference was made in my last year's report, and which had been lost by faulting. A rise was put for a considerable distance along the fault, but only occasional small boulders of quartz were met with.

*New Big River Mine.*—Development at this mine was confined wholly to Nos. 11 and 12 levels, and consisted mainly of the driving of intermediates between the two levels and connecting them with rises and winzes. The total development of this nature amounted to 421 ft. On the whole, the development has not been as satisfactory as could have been hoped for, the stone below No. 11 level being evidently very broken and not nearly in such quantity as in the levels above. On the bottom level, No. 12, the reef-track was picked up and driven on for about 100 ft. So far it has been small, but promises to open out ahead. During the year 3,976 tons were crushed and treated for a recovery of 3,431 oz. 15dwt. gold, valued at £13,497 5s. 7d. The stone may be said to have come mainly from No. 12 level stopes. On an average forty-two men were employed.

*New Keep-it-dark Mine.*—In this property no work was done in the Keep-it-dark Mine itself, but a tribute party of five men has carried out considerable prospecting in the old Golden Ledge section which has lain untouched for very many years. The two old adits, known as Nos. 1 and 2, were picked up, and the latter was driven a further 125 ft. along a reef-track which is considered to be the same as that on which the valuable shoot of stone known as the Old Dark shoot was worked in the very early days of the mine. Boulders of quartz carrying gold were met with along the whole course of this new driving, but nothing in the way of solid reef was met with. A leading-stope was taken off the first 40 ft. of the new extension of the adit, but the stone, on treatment, did not prove to be payable. In picking up No. 1 adit quartz from 3 ft. to 4 ft. wide was found to be going underfoot, and a winze was sunk on it to a depth of 20 ft. just inside the adit-mouth. The stone from this was crushed, but the values did not prove satisfactory. During the course of the prospecting and repair work 164 tons of stone were recovered from the drives, the leading stope, and the winze referred to, which in treatment by amalgamation and cyaniding yielded 66 oz. 4 dwt. 18 gr. gold, valued at £204 18s. 6d.