

The Clutha River Gold-dredging Company proceeded with the erection of a powerful modern dredge on the left bank of the Clutha River above the Alexandra Bridge, Vincent County. On account of an abnormally low-river period it has not been possible to launch the pontoons. The erection has proceeded as far as possible, but the dredge cannot be completed until the river rises to the launching-level. All the material for the final equipment is now on the claim. Both this and the Molyneux Company's dredge will be electrically operated, power being obtained from the Vincent Power Board.

Aitken's Dredge, Maitland, Waikaka Valley, Southland County (R. L. Smail, dredgemaster).—Eight men employed. Average dredging depth 14 ft. This dredge is steam operated. The gold won amounted to 1,190 oz. 2 dwt. 10 gr., valued at £9,083 18s. 10d.

Rainbow Dredging Company, Ltd., Wainumu, Southland County (A. Cook, dredgemaster).—Two men employed. Average dredging depth 7 ft. The gold won amounted to 121 oz. 0 dwt. 14 gr., valued at £743 16s. 7d. This dredge is diesel operated.

Waipapa Beach, near Otara, Southland.—This dredge was built during the early months of the year, and has wooden pontoons 50 ft. by 23 ft. by 5 ft. and an open connected bucket line of twenty-two built-up buckets of 2½ cubic feet capacity running at thirteen buckets per minute. Power is obtained from a 70 horse-power Diesel engine through chain, and then belt drives to water pump and gravel pump. Water for treatment purposes is obtained by a 10-in. Kawarau pump. Total spread across head of tables 48 ft. Total area of coconut matting 700 square feet. Some of the material passing over the tables is discharged about 30 ft. astern of the dredge and some is lifted by 4-in. gravel pump and discharged at about 50 ft. astern. Coarse material passing over perforated plates is discharged about 10 ft. astern. The dredge was completed and commenced operations in June. The gold won amounted to 512 oz. 8 dwt., valued at £3,753 19s.

MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD.

Platinum.—14 oz. 9 dwt. 12 gr. of platinum was obtained from the Round Hill Mine and by the Orepuki Mining Syndicate, Orepuki, the estimated value being £78 17s. 1d.

Silver.—3 oz. 15 dwt. of silver was obtained in the Nevis, valued at 9s. 10d.

Petroleum.—Southland Oil, Ltd. No boring has been done at either No. 1 or No. 2 bore during the year.

Scheelite.—In the Glenorchy area the yield from the various mines totalled 32 tons 5 cwt. of concentrates valued at £3,675.

In the Macraes area the yield was 7 tons 2 cwt. of concentrates valued at £1,044.

The total yield of concentrates from the Glenorchy and Macraes Mines amounted to 39 tons 7 cwt., valued at £4,719.

FATAL ACCIDENTS.

There were four fatal accidents during the year, as follows:—

On the 3rd February, Robert Massey, an employee of the Skippers Gold-mining Company, Ltd., lost his life. Massey was employed on a shift 4 p.m. to midnight, at the claim operated by the company on the Shot-over River at Maori Point, and he fell into the steel flume, into which the diverted water of the river is short-circuited across Maori Point Beach, and was drowned. His body was recovered from the river on the following Wednesday afternoon.

On the 14th February, Thomas Weatherall, miner, of Blue Spur, met with an accident, sustaining a fracture of the upper ribs on the left side close to the breast bone, bruising of the lower abdomen and hip bones in the pelvis region, from which he died in the Tuapeka Hospital on the 22nd February. The accident was caused by a fall of clay from the overburden overlying the layer of alluvial material, which was being mined by the openface method. At the time of the accident the deceased was engaged in filling and wheeling the alluvial material to the chute above the sluice box and a large piece of clay slipped off a greasy back and hit the deceased.

On the 15th April, Albert Ernest McEwen, miner, of Blackstone Hill, was killed by a fall of earth on his claim at the upper end of German Gully, Blackstone Hill. The deceased was working alone and was caught by a fall from the sandy overburden overlying the alluvial material.

On the 29th November, William Pierce, miner, of Alexandra, was killed by a fall of earth on his claim on the left bank of the Manuherikia River, about five chains above the Alexandra railway and traffic-bridge.

NON-FATAL ACCIDENT.

There was one non-fatal accident during the year, as follows:—

On the 2nd September, W. G. McDonald, a subsidized miner, sustained a compression fracture of the first lumbar vertebra. This accident was caused by the breaking of the suspension rope carrying a chair across the Taieri River just about the junction of the river and the Three O'clock Creek. McDonald was thrown into the river but managed to reach the bank.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Prospecting by means of boring has been carried out in many areas, and possible dredging areas have been located in the Vincent and Southland Counties. The large mining companies interested are boring the areas thoroughly and systematically.

Lode mining has not made much progress during the year.

The increase in the quantity of gold won by quartz mining amounts to 12 oz. 16 dwt. 13 gr., valued at £497 11s. 8d. The number of men increased by seven.

In alluvial mining every endeavour has been made by all classes of miners to utilize the water available to the best advantage. The early and latter parts of the year were dry, thus causing a shortage of water during these periods. The Shotover and Arrow Rivers were low for a long period, and the miners were able to make good use of this low-river period. The decrease in the quantity of gold won amounted to 1,599 oz. 16 dwt. 15 gr., with a decrease in value of £5,829 10s. 3d. The number of men decreased by 249.

Dredge mining showed more activity and the increase in the quantity of gold won amounted to 1,538 oz., with an increase in value of £11,575. The number of men increased by three.

The subsidized mining schemes in the Tuapeka, Maniototo, Lake, and Vincent Counties, together with the 8s subsidy scheme in the rest of the districts, have continued to operate during the year. The number of men employed, however, has decreased considerably. No discoveries of importance have been recorded, but areas are being tested both for reef and alluvial gold and definite information is being obtained.

Drilling operations are now being carried out in the Vincent County under the supervision of the mining engineer in charge of the county subsidized mining schemes. Nothing of importance has been located by the special reef-prospecting parties, and the treatment plant at Conroys Gully has ceased operations until more ore is offering.

PROSECUTIONS.

Three informations were laid during the year, all against the same company: The first charge, that of failing to give notice of an accident to the Inspector of Mines, as provided for by section 297 (a) of the Mining Act, 1926, was dismissed. On the second charge, that of employing workmen on Sundays for hire or reward, without first having obtained prior authority in writing from the Inspector of Mines, as provided for by section 260 of the Mining Act, 1926, the defendant was convicted and fined. On the third charge, that of employing workmen on Sundays and failing to pay the wages at the rate of one and a half times the ordinary wages, as provided for by section 266 of the Mining Act, 1926, the defendant was convicted and fined.