

Gold and Precious Stones.

PRODUCTION IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

£4000 WORTH OF DIAMONDS.

The value of gold won in New South Wales up to the end of last year is £57,189,232. This is the opening statement made under the heading of gold in the annual report of the Department of Mines for the year 1909. Interesting particulars are given of the work in the various mining districts, as well as many valuable statistics. In connection with gold production the report goes on to say that the yield for the year 1909 is equivalent to 304,709oz fine, valued at £869,546, as compared with 294,793oz fine, valued at £954,854, for the year 1908, thus showing a decrease of 30,083oz fine, and £85,308 in value. This is the lowest yield since the year 1902.

The mines in the Cobar district have been the chief producers, and have furnished an output of 58,047oz fine, valued at £246,567; but the total is 60,505oz fine, and £25,937 in value less than in the previous year. The Mount Boppy Mine still maintains its position as the premier gold mine of the State, although the output is not so great as in former years. The cessation of smelting operations at the Great Cobar Mine during the last six weeks of the year also adversely affected the gold production of this district.

The yield obtained by the dredges forms an important item of the aggregate production. The gold recovered by these plants during the year amounted to 32,635oz fine, valued at £138,634. This yield, however, falls short of that of the year 1908 by 5383oz fine, and £22,433 in value. Since the inception of operations in 1900 the dredges have recovered 277,680 fine ounces of gold, valued at £1,179,512. The value of the yield obtained in the other more important divisions of the State besides Cobar is as follows:—Adelong, £71,998; Wellington, £44,521; Araluen, £41,076; Murrumburrah, £41,663; Wyalong, £37,032; Peak Hill, £28,852; Stuart Town, £21,148; and Hillgrove, £17,003.

The output from the Adelong division exhibits a satisfactory increase when compared with that of the previous year, as does also that from the Peak Hill division; but the returns from each of the other six divisions mentioned disclose a decrease. The yields from the hitherto important centres of Hillgrove and Wyalong show the marked falling off in value of £28,151 and £21,019 respectively.

The nine divisions enumerated contributed an aggregate output valued at £548,568, or 63 per cent. of the total gold yield of the State. Compared with the production from the same divisions in 1908, a falling off of £78,431 is shown, and which thus accounts for 92 per cent. of the decrease disclosed in the total yield.

DREDGING OPERATIONS.

The output furnished by the dredges during 1909 is valued at £235,463, or £5543 less than in the previous year. The yield contributed by the gold dredges shows a falling off in value of £22,433, but the value of the tin ore won is £16,890 in excess. It will be noticed that in the course of the past 10 years the dredging industry has furnished an output valued at £1,558,663. With the exception of the Wellington, Tumbarumba, and Braidwood divisions, the gold recovered from the dredging centres is less than in the previous year. The Araluen division, where there were 10 plants in operation, has supplied the largest yield, but is followed closely by the Adelong division, where the two pump dredges again secured very satisfactory returns. In the Wellington division the two bucket dredges were operated with much success, the output being 2185oz in excess of that for 1908. In the Braidwood division four large plants are being installed, and should they prove

that for 1908. In the Braidwood division four large plants are being installed, and should they prove successful in treating the auriferous drifts, a considerably augmented yield should be recorded for the current year.

The tin dredges recovered 1877 tons of stream tin, valued at £146,842, which is 115 tons, and £16,890 in value in excess of the production for the year 1908. The chief centre of operations was in the Tingha division, where 20 plants were at work. These plants won 1030 tons of stream tin, valued at £58,702, or £114 in value more than in the previous year. The output from the dredges in Emmaville division is very encouraging, and amounted to 466 tons, valued at £36,823, as compared with 337 tons, valued at

Key Excerpt:

GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES. PRODUCTION IN NEW SOUTH WALES, £ 4000 WORTH OF DIAMONDS. DIAMONDS AND EMERALDS

The value of the diamonds won during the year is estimated at £3969, as compared with £1368 in 1908, an increase of

£2601. The yield was contributed by miners working in the vicinity of Copeton, in the Tingha division, and it is estimated that 25 men were employed on an average during the year. It is reported that 19 carats of borts were procured, the largest stone weighing 3 carats. The chief yield was secured by Sheridan and party; working in what is known as the Deep Shaft, Copeton. They obtained 2200 carats of Diamonds, valued at £1772, and 10cwt of tin ore, valued at £40, from 224 loads of washdirt. The mines in the Blngara division were not re-opened during the year. The Wallendibby Diamond Mines. No Liability, was engaged prospecting an area of supposed diamondiferous ground at Snodgrass in the Delegate Division.

lead, and zinc obtained during the year from the ores mined in this State:—Silver, 2,717,018oz, value £382,605; lead, 64,821 tons, £798,789; zinc, nil; total, £1,176,394.

In addition, 409,433 tons of concentrates were exported to Great Britain and the Continent of Europe, the value placed on same being £3,707,650. The estimated gross metallic contents, based on average assays, is given hereunder, but it is, of course, impossible to say what proportion of the same was recovered. In the case of the lead and zinc contents, the quantities have only been estimated where payment is allowed for same:—Silver, 5,367,775oz; lead, 90,307 tons; zinc, 144,018oz. The actual value accruing to the Commonwealth (the separation of the metals being carried out in other States besides New South Wales) from the silver and silver-lead mines of this State during the year 1909 was, therefore, £3,554,074.

COPPER.

The value of the copper (metal and ore) produced to the end of the year 1909 is estimated at £10,127,953. The output for the year 1909 is valued at £434,737, which is £78,075 less than in the previous year. Several of the mines which in past years were large producers remained closed during the whole of the period under review, while, taken generally, work at the other mines throughout the State was, for a variety of reasons, only conducted on a limited scale. The Cobar District is the chief centre of the copper-mining industry, and the output for the year is valued at £253,378, as compared with £247,629 in the year 1908—a decrease of £5,749. Operations at the Great Cobar Mine were interrupted by a strike of tappers, and this, in conjunction with a shortage of fuel, was responsible for the suspension of smelting operations from November 17. The output thus represents only ten and a half months' work.

TIN.

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The value of the output of tin and tin-ore from the tin fields of the State to the end of 1909, is £3,454,290. The value of the production for the year 1909 is £211,023, an increase of £3,243 on that of the previous year. The dredging plants have furnished a yield of 1677 tons, valued at £146,842, which is an increase of £16,890 on the year 1908. The contribution from the dredges thus represents 89.5 per cent. of the total yield. The quantity of the stream tin recovered by the dredges during the past eight years is 7168 tons, valued at £679,181. The output from Tingha Division is estimated at 1435 tons, valued at £127,935, as compared with 1407 tons, valued at £117,600 in 1908. Of this yield the dredges supplied 1030 tons valued at £85,702. In the yield from the Emmaville Division, a very encouraging increase is shown, owing to the augmented returns from the dredges. The yield is estimated at 675 tons, valued at £56,700, as compared with 547 tons, valued at £43,890 in the previous year. The indications favor the opinion that a still larger output will be forthcoming from this division during the year 1910. The yield from the Deepwater Division falls short of that of the previous year, but, as against this the returns from the Wilson's Downfall and Glen Innes Divisions exhibit a good advance.

DIAMONDS AND EMERALDS.

The value of the diamonds won during the year is estimated at £3655, as compared with £1358 in 1908, an increase of £2297. The yield was contributed by miners working in the vicinity of Copeton, in the Tingha division, and it is estimated that 25 men were employed on an average during the year. It is reported that 19 carats of borts were procured, the largest stone weighing 3 carats. The chief yield was secured by Sheridan and party, working in what is known as the Deep Shaft, Copeton. They obtained 2200 carats of diamonds, valued at £1772, and 16cwt of tin ore, valued at £40, from 234 loads of washdirt. The mines in the Singara division were not re-opened during the year. The Wallendibby Diamond Mines, No Liability, was engaged prospecting an area of supposed diamantiferous ground at Snodgrass, in the Delegate division.

It was mentioned in the departmental report for the previous year that the emerald mine at The Glen, in the Emmaville division, had been re-opened and worked; but that particulars of the actual output were not available. It has since been ascertained that about 1000 carats of emeralds, valued at £1600 or £1700, were obtained. The largest stone in the rough weighed 60 carats. A parcel of these stones was cut in Europe at the instance of Messrs. Angus and Coote, jewellers, Sydney. The largest cut stone weighed 8 carats. Some 50 stones of the parcel were of fair quality, but in general run of color they were pale.