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THE PROGRESS OF
THE MINERAL INDUSTRY
OF
TASMANIA,

FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1897.

COMPILED BY

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BY ORDER OF

THE HONOURABLE ALFRED T. PILLINGER,
MINISTER OF MINES.

1897.



Tasmania:

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1898.



THE PROGRESS OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY

FOR THE QUARTER ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1897.

Launceston, 31st January, 1898.

DURING the quarter ending 31st December, 1897, there has been a slight increase in the output of Tin Ore and Copper, but a considerable decrease in that of Gold, Silver-lead Ore, and Coal, as compared with the previous quarter, and the total value of the mineral output for the year 1897 has not reached the amount anticipated, though it shows a large increase on the figures for 1896 owing to the output of Copper from Mount Lyell.

The following Table shows, as far as can be ascertained, the quantities and values of the metals and minerals raised and exported during the past quarter and for the whole year :—

	DURING THE QUARTER ENDING 31ST DEC., 1897.		DURING THE YEAR 1897.		Per cent. to Total for the whole year.
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	
		£		£	
Gold raised ozs.	16,090	59,125	60,644	226,206	} 24·30
Gold Quartz and Pyrites exported tons	112	1128	414	3994	
Silver Ore exported..... "	3457	41,400	18,045	202,000	21·32
Copper Ore and Metal exported "	1452	101,065	4758	329,618	34·80
Tin Ore and Metal ex- ported "	642	40,136	2401	148,931	15·72
Iron Ore exported "	339	348	894	812	0·09
Coal raised "	8767	7014	42,196	35,757	3·77
TOTAL VALUE.....	... £	250,216	... £	947,318	

During the year £240,650 was paid in dividends, as follows:—

	£	Per cent. to Total.
From Copper mines	94,220	39·15
Gold "	82,575	34·31
Tin "	48,000	19·95
Silver "	15,250	6·34
Coal "	605	0·25
TOTAL	240,650	100·00

GOLD.

Of the 16,090 ozs. Gold obtained during the past quarter, the various fields produced as follows:—

DISTRICT.	GOLD PRODUCED.			
	Quartz.	Cyanide and Chlorination.	Alluvial.	TOTAL.
	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.
Beaconsfield.....	6955	528	5	7488
Mathinna	6642	...	...	6642
Lefroy .....	...	950	17	967
Mount Victoria	616	...	...	616
Lisle .....	...	...	200	200
West Coast, Middlesex, &c. ...	...	...	177	177
TOTAL	14,213	1478	399	16,090

BEACONSFIELD.—At Beaconsfield, work at the Tasmania mine is at present considerably restricted, owing to a burst of water which occurred on December 18th at the 718 feet level. The water rose above the back of the 500 feet level, but fortunately, by means of the flood-gates, it can be kept from the shaft, so that the pumps are accessible, and the water is being slowly lowered, but it will take a considerable time to completely drain the mine. Sufficient stone is being raised above the 500 feet level to keep the 60-head battery working, and 20 heads of the Florence battery are engaged crushing the surface capping of the reef. The quartz is not of such good quality as that obtained from the lower levels, so that the output of gold for the current quarter will be less than usual. During the past quarter £8732 5s. has been paid in dividends, bringing the total amount of dividends paid up to £670,061 10s. At the new main shaft 14-inch pumps have been put in, which easily keep the water under, and sinking has been resumed.

None of the other mines on the field are as yet in the producing stage, but active prospecting and development work is going on, and it is probable that capital will shortly be introduced to thoroughly test the ground adjoining the Tasmania mine, with good chance of success.

LEFROY.—At the New Pinafore mine driving has been continued along the reef at the 1150 feet level without meeting anything payable up to date. A start has also been made to sink the central shaft below the 800 feet level.

At the Volunteer work has been confined to sinking the main winze, and a start will shortly be made to crosscut for the reef at 1300 feet, with every hope of striking payable stone. The cyanide plant has yielded a good profit, but is now shut down, all available sands being finished. Altogether 3000 tons of sand were treated, which yielded 492 ozs. of gold. All the other mines are engaged in underground prospecting at shallow depths, and nothing of importance has been reported during the quarter.

MATHINNA.—At Mathinna the New Golden Gate stone crushed during the quarter has been richer than usual, and there has been an increased yield. The main shaft has been sunk to 1330 ft., and opening sets put in at 1300 ft. During the past quarter £8800 has been paid in dividends, making a total of £172,000 returned to shareholders.

Very little success has attended the operation of the English company owning the Sunbeam, Twilight, Old Boys, and Hatherton mines, and operations are being suspended. Several of the outside mines have good prospects, and it is probable that the Golden Spur Mine, adjoining the New Golden Gate, will shortly be reopened.

MANGANA.—Active development work is going on at the New Sovereign Mine, but there is nothing fresh to report from this field.

MOUNT VICTORIA.—Some rich stone has been obtained from the Ringarooma Mine, and the prospects of the field are improving. During the quarter 293 tons of quartz were crushed yielding 616 ozs. Gold. Crushing has been temporarily suspended, owing to scarcity of water.

The mines at Warrentinna are engaged in development work.

Of the Alluvial Fields, Lisle has produced most gold for the past quarter, but the total for the whole Colony was only 399 ozs.

TIN.

MOUNT BISCHOFF.—At the Mount Bischoff Mine the output has been well maintained in spite of an exceptionally dry season, and 630 tons of tin ore have been obtained during the past quarter. During the same period £12,000 has been paid in dividends, the total amount paid up to the end of 1897 being £1,488,000.

During the half year ending December 31st, 1897, 47,519 tons of material were crushed, equal to $4\frac{1}{3}$ tons per stamp head per 24 hours actual working time, producing 1230 tons Black Tin, equal to 2.58 per cent. The total cost of mining, including development and progressive work, crushing and dressing, maintenance of plant, management, bagging, &c., amounted to 5s. $7\frac{1}{3}d.$ per ton of tin-bearing rock; a decrease of more than 1s. per ton on the previous half year's figures.

In the North Eastern District including Branhholm, Derby, Moorina, Pioneer, Mount Cameron, &c., there has been a great scarcity of water during the past quarter. The output of tin ore was 266 tons 8 cwt.

Scarcity of water has also very much hampered tin mining operations in the Eastern District, including Weldborough, Blue Tier, St. Helen's, and Ben Lomond, and the yield for the past quarter was only 50 tons 15 cwt. tin ore. At the Anchor and Australian, the dressing plants will be ready to start as soon as there is sufficient water, and there should be a considerable increase in the output of tin ore during the current quarter.

SILVER.

The output of silver lead ore from the Zeehan-Dundas Fields has shown a considerable falling off during the last few months, but the value per ton is well maintained. At the Montana the new dressing mill is in full swing and doing good work. Prospects at the Silver Queen have considerably improved lately. The Oonah has been idle for some time awaiting the completion of the concentrating mill, which ought to have been ready two or three months ago. The British Zeehan mill is also idle, the boiler having been condemned, but work will probably be soon resumed. There is nothing fresh to report from the other mines in the District, but steady work is going on, and the output for the current quarter should be larger than that for the past quarter, which amounted to 3425 tons, valued at £40,948.

COPPER.

At the Mt. Lyell Company's Works, smelting operations have been continued without interruption, and up to January 5th, 1898, a total of 4809 tons blister copper had been produced, being 1302 tons since September 30th, 1897.

Preparations are now being made to erect five additional furnaces, bringing the plant up to a capacity of 1000 tons per day. This will involve additions to the converter plant, the capacity of which is at present from 20 to 25 tons copper per day, and it has also been decided to erect a refining and parting plant.

The following particulars of the work done for the half-year ending September 30th, 1897, are taken from the half-yearly reports.

The costs per ton of ore treated were as follows :—

	For half-year ending September 30, 1897.	For previous half- year.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Mining operation	0 1 4·88	0 1 8·27
Removal of overburden	0 2 0	0 2 0
Smelting operations.....	0 16 2·44	0 18 1·64
Converter operations	0 3 7·78	0 3 10·39
	£1 3 3·1	£1 5 8·3

So that a reduction of 2/5·2 per ton has already been effected.

The ore treated for the half-year was 41·507 tons gross, assaying 4·40 per cent. copper, 5·055 ozs. silver, and 0·1807 ozs. gold per ton. This included 3560 tons from the No. 4 Tunnel, which it was necessary to remove, which assayed 6·847 per cent. copper, 31·831 ozs. silver, and 0·1535 ozs. gold per ton.

Since the beginning of smelting operations a total quantity of 83,804 tons gross was treated up to Sept. 30th, 1897, of an average assay of 4·699 per cent. copper, 4·09 silver, and 0·1904 gold per ton. The average extraction was 4·314 per cent. copper, 3·95 ozs. silver, and 0·1912 ozs. gold per ton on the gross tonnage.

During the half year the converter plant treated 5745 tons of matte, and produced 2953 tons of blister copper of an average assay value of 98·847 per cent. copper, 91·770 ozs. silver, and 4·413 ozs. gold per ton. The totals up to the end of the half-year were :—Matte treated, 6922 tons ; blister copper produced,

3507 tons, with an average assay value of 98·83 per cent. copper, 90·378 ozs. silver, and 4·393 ozs. gold per ton.

The first dividend of 4s. per share, on 221,100 shares, amounting to £44,220, was declared on July 1st, 1897. The balance of the 250,000 shares were afterwards issued, and on October 1st, 1897, the second dividend of 4s. per share, amounting to £50,000, was payable, the third of a similar amount being payable on January 1st, 1898.

Important developments have taken place at the North Lyell, Lyell Tharsis, Crown Lyell, &c., and development work is being actively carried on. The North Mount Lyell Co. is constructing a railway from the mine to Kelly's Basin on Macquarie Harbour, passing by Mt. Darwin, and attention is thus being drawn to large deposits of hematite there, which are said to be similar to the "Blow" at Mt. Lyell.

At Mt. Read steady development work is going on, but here, as in other parts, work has been impeded owing to the disastrous bush fires which have swept away whole camps, and in several cases destroyed instruments, plans, &c.

The Colebrook Mine is being systematically opened up, and in the Rosebery District the Mt. Black Co. has erected a small winding plant, and is busy sinking. A pumping plant has also been ordered, but it is a very difficult matter to get machinery on to the ground. There is nothing fresh to report from the Cutty Sark District on the north side of the Pieman, but active prospecting and development work is being carried on.

At the Rocky River the Rocky River Company has a large quantity of ore at grass, and arrangements are being made to get it away.

COAL.

The output of coal is entirely regulated by the demand, and as a large proportion is used for household purposes, the consumption is much less during the hot summer months.

During the past quarter the output from the Mount Nicholas mines was 8181 tons, made up as follows:—Mount Nicholas, 4105; Cornwall, 3956; and Jubilee, 120.

586 tons have been raised from the Russel Colliery at Tarleton. The owners of the Dulverton Colliery at Railton are at present confining their attention to fire-clay, which is of very good quality. Several orders for fire-bricks have been executed, and as they can be placed on the market at considerably less than the imported bricks, there is a probability of a good trade springing up.

The number of men employed in mining throughout the Colony is steadily increasing, the figures for the past quarter being—

Europeans.....	5253
Chinamen	312
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TOTAL	5565
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In the previous Report on the mineral industry of Tasmania an error occurs in page 17, line 7. The percentage of ash in the Mount Nicholas coal should read, from "8 to 15," not "85."