

MININD1898-1

THE PROGRESS OF
THE MINERAL INDUSTRY

OF

TASMANIA,

FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1898.

COMPILED BY

J. HARCOURT-SMITH, ESQ., B.A.,

GOVERNMENT GEOLOGIST FOR TASMANIA,

BY ORDER OF

THE HONOURABLE ALFRED T. PILLINGER,

MINISTER OF MINES.

1898.



Tasmania:

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1898.



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FOR THE QUARTER ENDING MARCH 31, 1898.

12th May, 1898.

The following Table shows the quantities and values of the Metals and Minerals raised and exported during the quarter ending March 31, 1898, and during the previous Quarter:—

	DURING THE QUARTER ENDING MARCH 31, 1898.		DURING THE QUARTER ENDING DEC. 31, 1897.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
		£		£
Gold won ozs.	9367	35,578	16,090	59,125
Gold Quartz and Pyrites exported tons	69	641	112	1128
Silver Ore exported..... "	3327	38,795	3457	41,400
Blister Copper exported..... "	1125	78,750	} 1452	101,065
Copper Ore exported "	16	376		
Tin exported..... "	543	34,752	642	40,136
Iron Ore exported "	548	548	339	348
Coal raised "	9632	7705	8767	7014
TOTAL VALUE .....	... £	197,145	... £	250,216

As will be seen from the above, there has been a decrease as compared with the previous quarter in everything except Iron Ore and Coal, which show a slight increase. Various causes have contributed to this falling off in the mineral output, which will be explained under the head of the different metals.

GOLD.

The quantity of Gold obtained from the different fields is shown in the following Table :—

	GOLD PRODUCED DURING THE QUARTER ENDING MARCH 31, 1898.				TOTALS FOR PREVIOUS QUARTER.
	From Quartz.	Alluvial.	Cyanide and Chlorination.	TOTAL.	
	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.
Beaconsfield	3313	6	387	3706	7488
Mathinna	4519	...	...	4519	6642
Lefroy .....	...	...	383	383	967
Mount Victoria ...	...	...	...	...	616
Lisle .....	...	200	...	200	200
West Coast, Middlesex, &c.	9	550	...	559	177
TOTAL	7841	756	770	9367	...
TOTALS for previous Quarter ...	14,213	399	1478	...	16,090

The principal falling off in the yield of gold has been at Beaconsfield, which has only produced 3706 ozs., as against 7488 ozs. for the previous quarter. This is due to the lower levels at the Tasmania Mine being still inaccessible owing to the water, which is receding very slowly. It is now about 90 feet below the 500 feet level, and it will probably be some months before the best stone in the bottom levels can be worked. The new main shaft has been sunk to a depth of 650 feet, and very little trouble has been experienced so far with the water. A good deal of prospecting is going on in different parts of the field, and negotiations are still pending for the introduction of English capital to thoroughly test some of the leases adjoining the Tasmania Mine.

At Lefroy the New Pinafore and Volunteer Companies are still working steadily, and though nothing permanently payable has been met with in the bottom levels, the prospects are encouraging. No quartz has been crushed during the past quarter, and the falling off in the yield from the Cyanide and Chlorination Plants is partly due to scarcity of water, and partly to the fact that the Volunteer Company has treated all available sands.

Six other companies are at work on the field, chiefly engaged in prospecting work.

The New Golden Gate Mine at Mathinna continues to open up well, and has very large reserves of quartz in sight. There

has been a slight falling off in the amount of stone crushed and gold won during the past quarter, owing to the great scarcity of water for the battery. Up to 31st January, 1898, 114,141 tons of quartz had been crushed, which yielded 106,343 ozs. of gold, an average of 18 dwts. 16 grs. per ton, realising £393,715 2s. 6d. The average yield for the past quarter has been over 1 oz. gold per ton, and all costs of working and management during the six months ending 31st January, 1898, amounted to £1 11s. 8d. per ton of quartz crushed, equivalent to 8 dwts. 14 grs. of gold. During the past quarter £10,400 has been paid in dividends, bringing the total amount paid to £182,400, or £5 14s. per share.

A new Company, called the Tasmanian New Golden Gate Extended Mines, Limited, has acquired the Golden Spur Mine and the Gate Extended Mine, and active work has been started on both properties. It is intended to sink the Golden Spur shaft to 1000 feet, and to extend the west cross-cut from the 400 feet level at the Gate Extended to 800 feet from the shaft to prospect the ground north of the Golden Spur. At Dan's Rivulet several small companies are at work, and a few tons of payable quartz have been raised. A good deal of prospecting is being carried on between Mathinna and Fingal, and this promises to be a very successful field. The property formerly known as the Miami Mine, about five miles from Fingal, is being vigorously opened up by an English Company, called the Salmon Gold Estates. The reef is a strong one, and shows gold freely throughout. Several other reefs are known of in the locality, and the prospects of the district are very encouraging. Being so close to the railway at Fingal there will be no difficulty in getting machinery on to the field; but water is rather scarce.

At Mangana, the Mangana Gold Reefs, Limited, (late New Sovereign G. M. Co.) have struck some rich stone, and a trial crushing is now being put through the battery. At Mount Victoria no stone has been crushed during the past quarter, as there has not been sufficient water to drive the battery.

TIN.

Owing to the exceptionally dry season, there has been a considerable falling off in the output of tin ore, especially from the Eastern and North-Eastern Districts. Even at Mount Bischoff, which usually has such a heavy rainfall, the effects of the drought were felt, and the battery was not able to run full time: the drought has, however, now broken up, and there should be a plentiful supply of water for the current quarter. The output of black tin for the past quarter was 582 tons, as

against 630 tons for the previous quarter. The company shipped 393 tons refined tin, valued at £25,200, and paid £12,000 in dividends, bringing the total amount of dividends paid up to £1,500,000. In the Eastern District alluvial tin-mining has been practically at a standstill owing to scarcity of water. At the Anchor Mine the battery of 100 head of stamps is complete, but it has been only able to work a few days, through lack of water for driving purposes. 1600 tons have been crushed for a return of 12 tons ($=\frac{3}{4}\%$) black tin, assaying over 70% metallic tin. With a plentiful supply of water, this should leave a good margin of profit, the expenses of mining, crushing, dressing, &c. being estimated at 4s. to 4s. 6d. per ton of rock crushed. A survey is now being made for a race to bring in a further supply of water.

At the Australian Mine the battery is driven by steam-power, but for the greater part of the quarter there has not been enough water for dressing purposes, and steps are being taken to augment the supply.

In the North-Eastern District the same scarcity of water has prevailed, and the output of tin ore only amounted to 119 tons for the quarter. Very little sluicing could be done at Derby, but there is considerable activity there in cutting water-races, &c., and a dredging plant is also being constructed to work the accumulated tailings and the bed of the Ringarooma River.

SILVER.

The output from the Zeehan and Dundas Fields was 3327 tons of ore, of an approximate value of £38,795. The following list shows the principal mines contributing, with the quantity and approximate value of the ore raised by each:—

	Tons.	Approx. value.
Western	820	£11,070
Montana	750	10,125
Smith's Section.....	249	3193
Comet	245	1170
Silver Queen.....	210	1650
Curtin-Davis Proprietary	192	1920
Tasmanian Crown.....	106	1215
Oonah	103	961

The following mines have contributed less than 100 tons, viz. :—British Zeehan, S.W. Curtin-Davis, No. 1 Curtin-Davis, Montagu No. 1, Queen Extended, Comstock, West Comet, &c.

During the greater part of the quarter the Oonah Mine was closed down, pending completion of the concentrating plant. This has now been started, and active underground work is again

being carried on. On Smith's Section three tribute parties are at work, with somewhat primitive appliances. If properly worked this section would prove a very valuable one. At the Western and Montana sinking has been resumed, and the all-important question as to whether the lodes will prove productive at a greater depth is in a fair way to being solved. Disastrous bush fires swept through the country early in the year, and on February 27th the poppet-legs, engine-house, &c. of the Comet Mine at Dundas were destroyed, and the shaft-timbers burnt for about 40 feet from the surface. Much damage was done to the fine winding and pumping plant, but with commendable energy the company at once started to repair the damage and the mine should soon be at work again. This mine has large reserves of low-grade oxidised lead ores too poor to ship, but which should pay to smelt locally, and it is gratifying to note smelting works will shortly be erected near Zeehan by a strong English and German syndicate known as the Smelting Company of Tasmania. The site chosen for the smelters is close to the Zeehan-Strahan Railway, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Zeehan, and there is an abundant supply of good limestone close at hand. Active operations are already in progress, and with the completion of these reduction works there will be renewed activity in many of the Zeehan and Dundas Mines with large bodies of low-grade ores. The company intends to treat Copper ores as well as Lead ores, and has made an offer to take 1500 tons per month from the Hercules Mine at Mount Read.

COPPER.

Queenstown, the terminus of the Mount Lyell Company's Railway, is a very busy town, and it is spreading rapidly. The smelting works are situated about a mile from the town. There are five furnaces in blast; a sixth, under the same roof, is nearing completion, and the foundations, &c. for the second nest of five furnaces are being pushed on with all possible speed. The company has its own brick-making plant, sawmill, &c., and, including these and the railway with the mine, flux quarries, reduction works, &c., employs over 2400 men. For the past quarter 1125 tons of blister copper have been shipped, and a third dividend amounting to £50,000 has been paid, making a total of £144,220. At the mine about 260 men are employed stripping the over-burden and breaking ore for the smelters.

The North Mount Lyell Company purpose erecting smelting works of their own, the site chosen being about 10 miles from Gormanston on the route surveyed for the railway to Kelly's Basin,

It is probable that the Lyell Tharsis Company will dispose of their ore to the Mount Lyell Company, and will be ready to send out ore as soon as means of transport are provided. None of the other mines at Mount Lyell are at present in a position to put out ore in any quantity, but a good deal of prospecting and development work is going on.

In the Dora and Red Hills Districts considerable activity prevails, with fair prospects of success, but prospecting in these out-of-the-way districts is very expensive, and the climate is very wet and cold. Should the Great Northern Railway be continued from Rosebery to Mount Lyell these districts could be easily tapped by short branch lines at Mount Read. The Mount Read Company's big deposit of pyrites is being opened up by open cuts, and a survey has been made for an aerial tram to connect the mine with Deep Lead, the present terminus of the North East Dundas Tramway. Active development work is being carried on at the Hercules, South Hercules, and other mines, and the Hercules Company is constructing a self-acting ground tramway to convey their ores to Deep Lead, the fall from the mine being about 1500 feet in a little more than a mile.

A survey has been made for a branch of the North-East Dundas Tramway to Rosebery, leaving the present line near the Fahl Ore Mine, but it has not yet been definitely decided to construct this line, and in the meantime a corded track is being made from Deep Lead to Rosebery, a distance of about 4 miles, passing close to the Jupiter group of mines. At the Tasmanian Copper Company's Mine at Rosebery a suitable site has been cleared for the reduction works, and an expert metallurgist has arrived from Colorado to supervise the erection of the same, but no heavy machinery can be brought in until the Great Northern Railway is completed to Rosebery. In the meantime the mine is being opened up, and water-races, dams, &c. constructed.

At the Mount Black Mine the pumping plant is completed, and sinking has been resumed. The pump is operated by means of a wire rope from a water-wheel nearly 1000 feet distant from the shaft, and works very smoothly.

Ore similar to that of the Tasmanian Copper Mine, containing a high percentage of zinc, is being opened up in the North Tasmania and the Primrose mines, and several of the other mines in the district possess ores containing little or no zinc, which will be valuable to blend with the more refractory zinc ores. The Great Northern Railway Company have taken full advantage of the exceptionally long and dry summer, and have made such good progress with the work that it is expected that the line will be through to Rosebery early next year.

There is nothing fresh to report from the Colebrook Mine, which is being systematically exploited by means of tunnels.

A new copper discovery has lately been reported from the North-West Coast, but no details are yet to hand.

COAL.

As usual, by far the greater part of the coal output has come from the Mount Nicholas mines, the Mount Nicholas Colliery having produced 5221 tons, and the Cornwall Colliery 3933 tons.

The output from the Russell collieries was 462 tons. Good coal is reported to have been lately struck near Swansea, on the East Coast, and a start has again been made to work the seams near Port Cygnet, south of Hobart.

IRON ORE.

548 tons of iron ore have been shipped from the Blythe River during the past quarter. The ore is of first-class quality, and as shipping facilities have now been improved, a steady increase in the output may be expected.

BISMUTH.

There has not been sufficient water for sluicing the alluvial at the Shepherd & Murphy Mine, Bell Mount, but the lodes are opening up satisfactorily, and the Company intend to erect a battery and dressing plant as soon as the track admits of machinery being brought in.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the Mining Industry throughout the Colony is in a very healthy state, in spite of the temporary falling off in the returns during the past quarter.