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THE PROGRESS OF
THE MINERAL INDUSTRY
OF
TASMANIA.

FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1899.

COMPILED BY

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BY ORDER OF

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD MULCAHY,

MINISTER OF MINES.



Tasmania.

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1900



PROGRESS OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF TASMANIA

FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1899.

Hobart, 26th January, 1900.

THE following Table shows, as far as can be ascertained, the quantities and values of Metals and Minerals raised and exported during the Quarter ending 31st December, 1899, compared with the corresponding Quarter of 1898, and the previous quarter ending 30th September, 1899 :—

	During the Quarter ending 31 Dec., 1899.		During the Quarter ending 31 Dec., 1898.		During the Quarter ending 30 Sept., 1899.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
		£		£		£
Gold won	15,938	59,092	15,329	59,000	12,509	47,234
Auriferous Quartz and pyrites exported	tons 101½	887	189	1255	182	1453
Silver Ore exported	2772	35,210	4238	53,651	3706½	42,508
Blister Copper exported...	2827¾	255,580	1404	116,479	2360¾	208,965
Copper Ore exported	20	200	270	5400	129½	1246
Iron Ore exported	1619	1703	586	586	926	841
Coal raised	11,899	9519	11,107	9000	10,869	8695
Silver Bullion exported ...	869¼	32,684	...	...	637¼	19,087
Tin Ore exported	28¾	1851	...	...	25	1750
Lead exported	½	5	...	...	1½	9
Tin (metallic) exported ...	649	84,586	567	46,752	629¼	86,474
Gold and Silver Ore ex- ported .....	...	...	...	...	70	350
Wolfram ore exported ...	99	200	...	...	...	...
Asbestos exported	200	363	...	...	...	...
Gold Concentrates exported	8	80	...	...	...	...
Oxide Mineral exported ...	6	6	...	...	...	...
Zinc exported .....	...	...	...	...	4	4
TOTAL VALUE .....	... £	482,566	... £	292,123	... £	418,616

There is an increase of £63,590 in the total value for the previous quarter, and an increase of £190,443 in the total value, as compared with the corresponding quarter in 1898.

GOLD.

During the past quarter 10,338 ounces of gold were obtained from quartz, 928 ounces from alluvial, and 4672 ounces by means of the cyanide and chlorination processes. Total, 15,938 ounces, valued at £59,692.

The following table shows the quantities obtained from various sources on the different fields during the period under review, together with the totals for the corresponding quarter of 1898, and the previous quarter ending 30th September, 1899 :—

	Gold obtained during the Quarter ending 31st December, 1899.				Totals corresponding Quarter, 1898.	Totals for Quarter ending 30 Sept., 1899.
	Quartz.	Alluvial.	Cyanide & Chlorination.	TOTAL.		
	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.
Beaconsfield	4638	143	3544	8325	8020	7153
Mathinna	4483½	373	911	5767½	5648	4194
Mount Victoria, Warren- tinna, &c.	862½	96	...	958½	489	391
Lefroy	326	151	217	694	580	25
Lisle and Golconda .....	...	150	...	150	160	677
Mangana	20	...	...	20	71	170
West Coast, Middlesex, &c. ....	...	15	...	23	361	49
TOTALS	10,338	928	4672	15,938	...	...
TOTALS for corresponding Quarter, 1898	11,917	644	2768	...	15,329	...
TOTALS for Quarter end- ing 30th Sept., 1899 ...	7899	440	4320	...	...	12,659

BEACONSFIELD.—At the Tasmania Mine the 65-head battery was running continuously. During the past quarter 5585 tons of quartz were crushed, yielding 4609 ozs. 17½ dwts. retorted gold, as against 5835 tons crushed, yielding 3976 ozs. 13 dwts. for the previous quarter. In addition to this, 3544 ozs. 7 dwts. of smelted gold, worth £4 ls. per ounce, were obtained from the chlorination; total for the quarter, 8154 ozs. 4½ dwts. The total output from the mine up to the 30th December, 1899,

was 472,727 ozs. 10 dwts. from 400,345 tons crushed; value, £1,723,294, and the amount paid in dividends, £706,071 15s., including £9000 paid during the past quarter.

At the chlorine plant the four calcining furnaces and 30 vats are working well, giving good results. The capacity of the plant is about 180 tons per week, the cost of treatment being about 11s. 6d. per ton. The tailings from the leaching vats contain from 1 to 5 dwts. of gold to the ton, and are being saved for further treatment by cyanide. The weekly production of concentrates at the Tasmania battery is about 100 tons, so about 80 tons per week of the accumulated tailings are being worked up. The concentrates treated give an average of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. of gold to the ton. The hydraulic pumping plant at the main shaft was completed some time since, but is not yet at work, the cisterns not being complete at the 818-ft. level to allow the rams being placed in position, but are now in a forward state for completion.

At the main shaft the pumping engine has been shifted from the Lefroy shaft and placed at this shaft, and has worked satisfactorily in unwatering the shaft. The chamber at the 600-ft. level is now being cut out for the Reidles pumps, which are expected to be on the claim by next month.

The White Pinafore Company completed sinking the shaft to a further depth of 80 feet, making a total of 200 feet, and are now driving on the lode.

Apart from the celebrated mine, the Tasmania, which still maintains its position as the principal factor of the gold production of the Colony, there are but three undertakings requiring notice at Beaconsfield as gold mines. Two of these, a Victorian company and a local one, are actively engaged in searching for the continuation of the celebrated Tasmania reef to the west of that company's ground; and one, known as the "North Tasmania," is in active operation, though hitherto, with fluctuating prospects of success. Eighteen men are employed on this mine. The long-existing Ballarat "deep lead" enterprise, on the claims of which the original holders expended many thousands of pounds, is still suspended, having been for more than twelve months the subject of repeated litigation. It has now reverted to the original holders, and there is some ground for hope that the question of deep alluvial (payable) lead at Beaconsfield will be satisfactorily decided.

Active work has recently been commenced by the Australian Asbestos Company. The work is at present carried on by an open cutting into the formation, about 30 feet in width by 30 feet high, and has, up to the present, been carried forward about 70 feet.

Two hundred tons of the compound mineral, the utilisation of which is at present contemplated, has been sent to Melbourne.

LEFROY.—With regard to the Lefroy field, its future prospects are still centred in the proceedings of the New Pinafore Mine, in which it is intended to resume sinking from the 1300 feet attained when sinking operations were discontinued last year, which they will be enabled to do by taking advantage of "The Deep Sinking Encouragement Act" recently passed by Parliament.

The Volunteer Mine will probably avail itself of the same aid.

Of the remaining five mines in work at Lefroy but two, at present indicate much prospect of success. One of these, known as the "New Monarch," has yielded 276 ozs. of gold from 222 tons of stone treated; the other, very recently discovered, has given 50 ozs. of gold from 65 tons of stone. Each of these mines employs 20 men.

LISLE.—The old worked-out alluvial goldfield of Lisle continues to occupy some 40 diggers on extended claims of an acre.

GOLCONDA, DENISON, &C.—Some six or seven prospectors are engaged, and a few promising results have been met with, for the development of which the holders are now engaged in efforts to obtain capital.

MOUNT VICTORIA.—Steady and satisfactory progress continues, and the returns from crushings are considered very remunerative.

The Ringarooma Gold Mining Company has crushed 704 tons of quartz for 669 ozs. of gold, and the Central Ringarooma Gold Mining Company has crushed 210 tons for 193 ozs. 5 dwts. of gold.

The new electrical plant at the Ringarooma Company's mine is not yet completed.

Mr. F. W. Krushka has now 45 ozs. of alluvial gold on his freehold property at New River, four men being employed, and Messrs. Sowell & Co., at Mount Victoria, 26 ozs. of alluvial gold, two men being employed. On the whole, the prospects of this goldfield continue very satisfactory, and are looked upon as of a permanent character.

WARRENTINNA.—There are only four men employed. No quartz has been crushed. It is much to be regretted that this field does not receive more attention from capitalists, as it has given; heretofore, satisfactory returns from crushings.

WEST COAST.—At Woody Hill Messrs. Murray Bros. are still at work, and have lately tried a small crushing of eight tons, which yielded about 15 dwts. per ton. They are considerably handicapped for want of steam-power. If they could get assistance there is little doubt they could soon reap some return for the labour and time they have already expended.

TIN.

The total quantity of tin ore obtained during the quarter was 939 $\frac{3}{4}$ tons, being a decrease of 55 $\frac{1}{4}$ tons on the previous quarter.

WARATAH.—The output from the Mount Bischoff Mine was 500 tons, 224 men being employed. Three dividends of 15s. each were paid during the quarter, amounting to £27,000. The total amount paid in dividends by this company is £1,621,000, and the total quantity of tin ore obtained since the formation of the company, 56,395 tons 9 cwts. 3 qrs. 15 lbs.

The following particulars, taken from the last half-yearly Report, show the cost of treating a ton of stanniferous material during the six months ending 31st December, 1899:—

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Mining, including new works, maintenance, and other expenses	2	4
Hauling, filling, and emptying trucks	0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Crushing, dressing, and maintenance of plant.....	0	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Slime sheds.....	0	1
Ring-tail sheds	0	3
Management and supervision	0	5 $\frac{3}{4}$
Plant, including all machinery	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Development and progressive work	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ore-bagging	0	0 $\frac{1}{4}$
Sundries	0	4 $\frac{3}{4}$
Stores	0	4 $\frac{1}{4}$
Total	5	47 $\frac{00}{100}$

The Waratah Alluvial Company obtained 2 tons 9 cwts. of tin ore, two men being employed; the Phoenix Company, 4 tons 11 cwts., employing three men; and the Whyte River Company, 2 tons 17 cwts., employing four men.

NORTH-EASTERN DISTRICT.—During the quarter satisfactory progress has been made. The Briseis Company's claim has yielded 50 tons of tin ore, 20 men being employed. The Krushka Brothers' Mine has produced 50 tons also, which shows an increase of 24 tons over the previous quarter.

The New Brothers' Home No. 1 Mine has yielded 4 tons 2 cwts., showing a decrease of 8 tons 7 cwts. as compared with the previous quarter. Mining operations have temporarily ceased upon this claim, pending the waterworks for a large water supply from the upper part of the Ringarooma River being constructed, so that the mine can be worked in the future on a more extensive scale.

The Brothers' Home Extended Mine—worked on tribute—has won 15 tons 12 cwts. of tin ore, 9 men being employed.

The Arba Tin Mining Company has not raised any tin during the past quarter, mining operations being confined to stripping overburden, continuation of drainage tunnel, and also tailings easement.

A considerable number of small mining claims, principally in the locality of Mount Cameron, have been obliged to cease mining operations owing to shortage of water; but this state of things is usual at this time of year.

The purchase of the Briseis Tin Mine by a new company with a large capital will infuse new life and enterprise into the mining industry in this district.

The dredging plant of the Tasmanian Tin Dredging Company has not worked successfully. The dredge, after considerable trouble, was placed in position at a point in the river below the outlet of the Briseis tail-race where dredging commenced, but it was found that the machinery proved defective, and so injured by friction of gravel, that renewals have to be provided.

The Ringarooma Tin Dredging Company's dredge at South Mount Cameron is now nearly completed, and will, in a very short time, start operations on the company's claim.

The prospecting operations carried out by Mr. T. A. Allan on the Pioneer Tin Mining Company's sections at Bradshaw's Creek have, I understand, proved very satisfactory, and, with the introduction of additional capital, active measures will be immediately taken to provide an adequate supply of water to mine the claim on an extensive scale by the construction of a high-level watercourse from the Frome and Weld Rivers.

EASTERN DISTRICT.—The total quantity of tin ore obtained during the quarter was $154\frac{1}{2}$ tons, being a decrease of 18 tons on the previous quarter, owing to the scarcity of water. Of this quantity, 40 tons 16 cwts. were obtained from Ben Lomond and Rex Hill, 78 tons 3 cwts. from Blue Tier and Lottah, $16\frac{3}{4}$ tons from Weldborough, $17\frac{1}{2}$ tons St. Helen's and Scamander, and the balance from St. Paul's and Brookstead.

WEST COAST.—Tin-mining shows some slight signs of improvement. During the quarter about 4 tons were sent away from the vicinity of Heemskirk. Latterly the number of men employed there has increased to about 40. The New West Cumberland Mine has been taken over by a strong syndicate. The machinery is receiving a thorough overhaul, and it is expected that very soon regular shipments of tin ore will be produced.

SILVER.

WEST COAST.—The quantity of silver-lead ore sent away during the quarter from the Zeehan railway station for export from Strahan was 2189 tons, value, approximately, £43,298, as compared with 2908½ tons, value, approximately, £51,779 for the previous quarter.

The deficiency is principally attributable to the Silver Queen mine closing most of the workings, and the Western confining a great deal of attention to the erection of new machinery. These figures do not include quantities sent to the Tasmanian Smelting Company, particulars of which have not been received.

The principal contributing mines are :—

	Tons.	£
Silver King	1571	17,315
Montana	790	16,095
Western	634	11,524
Zeehan (Tas.)	564	11,169
Oonah	375	5589
Silver Queen	360	3400
Smith's Section	402	2416

The foundations of the new pumping engine at the Western mine are now being put down, and a new engine-shed is being erected. The shaft, now down 635 feet, will be continued as soon as the new plant is ready down to a depth of 1000 feet. Up to the present this company has paid £102,000 in dividends.

Included in the ore returns from the Oonah are 35½ tons of stannite, value £633. During the quarter this company produced 170 tons of firsts, and put through the concentrating mill 2139 tons of seconds for a product of 170 tons of marketable ore, value, £2107.

The main shaft has been sunk to a depth of 425 feet, and a crosscut then put in for 25 feet. It is expected that in another 86 feet (about six weeks' work) the lode will be cut.

Work in the lower levels of the Silver Queen was stopped last month, and nearly all the men were discharged. It is, however, anticipated that the Company will resume operations again soon.

The tributors on the Silver King have been very successful. Since the lode was discovered on the south section, in September last, they have raised over 1600 tons of ore, for which they have received a net value of about £18,000.

The Colonel North Company has begun work on what used to be the Grubb's Mine. The shaft is now being unwatered, and the concentrating plant will be overhauled and put in working order at once.

Work has been resumed at the Sylvester Mine,—the ore being sent to the Tasmanian Smelting Company

NORTH WESTERN DISTRICT.—The Magnet Company has shipped 295 tons 16 cwts. 3 qrs. of silver-lead ore during the quarter, employing 38 men.

MIDDLESEX BELL MOUNT, &c.—There is nothing to report at present. When the road is constructed, which will give access to the inaccessible country in which the Shepherd and Murphy, and other claims are situated, such mines will, without doubt, be enabled to proceed more efficiently.

COPPER.

MOUNT LYELL COMPANY'S REDUCTION WORKS.—The output of blister copper was 2402 tons, containing 2374 tons of copper, 194,253 ozs. of silver, and 7733 ozs. of gold,—gross value, £230,008.

At the smelting works of the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company, the converters have been extended to cope with the increased output. A plant has been erected for the purpose of turning the flue-dust into matte. The rope-ways are continuing to work satisfactorily. The mine is still being tested at a depth by means of a winze, and it appears that the deposit is richer below the present drives.

The South Mount Lyell has sunk a shaft to 600 feet, and it is now intended to test the size of the ore-body. The existence of the ore-body at this depth must materially enhance the value of the Mount Lyell Mine; the ore is similar in every respect. The Mount Lyell Company opened their Railway for general traffic from Strahan to Queenstown on the 1st of November last.

The Lyell Tharsis Company continues to deliver its ore to the Lyell Company's Smelters by an aerial ropeway, about 100 tons a day. This mine is worked on the open bench system. An air-compressing plant has been erected, capable of driving four rock-drills.

The North Mount Lyell Mine is sending out about 60 tons of ore daily to the Mount Lyell Smelters. The company is also constructing a 2-ft. tramway to the top of the haulage line. The Railway from Kelly's Basin is completed for about ten miles, and the remainder of the line is so far advanced that there is every prospect of the engine running through to Gormanston in three or four months time.

The Mount Lyell Blocks is continuing prospecting with encouraging results, and this mine will no doubt soon be in a position to send ore to the Mount Lyell smelters.

The South Tharsis concentrating mill has been completed and has started work in a very satisfactory manner. This mill will greatly benefit the Duke Lyell, Lyell Reserve, Glen Lyell, Prince Lyell, South Tharsis, North Lyell Consolidated, and the Western Tharsis. Work is also being done on the Crown Lyell, Mount Lyell Comstock, Mount Lyell Consols, Mount Lyell Extended, South Lyell, West Mount Lyell, and Great Southern Lyell.

The year 1899 closed satisfactorily for the mining industry at Mount Lyell and neighbourhood, and during the past year the progress towards development is to be seen in a marked degree. At Mount Jukes and Mount Darwin progress is checked through want of roads and the railway, and there is nothing of any consequence to report upon during the past quarter.

ROSEBERY.—The Mount Reid Company is sending in the usual supplies to the Tasmanian Smelting Co. Up to the end of December 2160 tons of ore had been sent from the mine, of which 2040 went to the smelters, and 120 tons were sent for treatment to foreign smelting works.

COAL.

There is an increase of 924½ tons of coal raised, as compared with the previous quarter.

The following list shows the quantity raised from the different collieries, and the number of men employed at each:—

	Quantity raised. Tons.	No. of men employed.
Mount Nicholas	6500	61
Cornwall	4721	53
Mount Cygnet	468	5
Dulverton	105	5
Ivanhoe	No Returns.	
York Plains.....	105	2
TOTAL	11,899	126

