In view of the critical condition of the industry, the Austrian Railway Minister visited the oil district and promised to introduce the use of oil instead of coal on the state railways in Galicia; he also arranged for improved transport facilities. A provincial association of oil producers, representing 80 per cent. of the total production, was formed, and this body made a contract with the state railways for the delivery of 220,000 metric tons of oil per annum. The railway authorities, however, found that it was not safe to use the oil in its crude state in railway locomotives, but that the benzine would have to be extracted first. The Producers' Association had not the capital to build the necessary works for this process or the new reservoirs required. Accordingly the Government undertook to build a factory extracting the benzine at Drohobycz, and to lease it to a cartel of the Austrian refineries which is being formed, and which will undertake to purify the oil for the use of the state railways. The state will pay the Producers' Association direct for the raw oil required at a price considerably higher than the present market price, and which has been fixed with reference to the cost of the coal that would have been required for the locomotives. The state will further build the reservoirs and lease them to the oil miners at a rate just sufficient to cover the interest and amortisation of the capital.

The Government has introduced a bill in the Reichsrath by which a concession will in future be necessary for carrying on the business of storing, handling, and refining raw oil in Austria, and the provincial authorities will be empowered to refuse this concession at their discretion.

In 1908 the amount of crude oil produced in Galicia was 1,734,235 metric tons, as compared with 1,175,974 tons in 1907 and 760,443 tons in 1906. 15,906 metric tons of mineral oils were imported into Austria-Hungary in 1908, as compared with 18,816 tons in 1907 and 27,399 tons in 1906; and 370,600 tons were exported in 1908, as compared with 217,258 and 195,885 tons respectively in 1907 and 1906. The export of mineral oils from the monarchy, chiefly in the shape of refined petroleum or benzine, has risen enormously during the last few years, having increased proportionately more rapidly than the total production, of which it now forms about the fifth part. Nearly two-thirds of the export are sent to Germany; then follow Fronce, Switzerland, Turkey, Italy and the United Kingdom, the last-named country only taking 4,500 tons.

NEW ZEALAND.

The Consolidated Goldfields of New Zealand in 1908 distributed dividends to the amount of £12,119, as against £18,178 in 1907. Progress Mine paid no dividend; but the Wealth of Nations Mine gave a higher yield than usual, the working profit being £14,500, or 21s 5d per ton.

UNITED STATES.

The improvement in the spelter market is being reflected in the zinc-producing districts of Colorado. This is especially noticeable at Leadville.

The U. S. Assay Office, Butte, Montana, reported receipts of $240,982 of gold during August. These receipts are unusually large.

The Goldfield Consolidated mill will probably be enlarged to a capacity of 1,000 tons per day. Its present capacity is 600 tons. Treatment costs are now less than $2 per ton of ore.

The railroads are granting reduced rates to delegates to the American Mining Congress to be held at Goldfield.

It is estimated that the output of the Goldfield Consolidated, Goldfield, Nevada, for August stands at $602,000. The ore tonnage was 22,160 tons. The estimated total cost of production was $155,000, leaving a net profit of $447,000.

The asbestos deposits near Casper, Wyoming, are being actively exploited. Two mills are to be erected in the near future.

MEXICO.

A number of mining companies have suffered directly and indirectly from the flood in the Monterey district. Although most of the mines are on high ground, their loss has been great through the destruction of transportation lines.

The tonnage of ore treated at the El Oro plant in August was 24,183 tons. Total yield was $215,120, and net profits $78,300.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Johannesburg.—A modified form of gelatine for blasting purposes has been produced at the Moddersfontein Explosives factory, and will, it is stated, enable two additional holes per shift to be drilled, requiring less labour for equivalent results, or enabling quicker and more economical development.

Mine Inspector Swinburne has recently made a highly valuable and instructive report upon the northern tin fields. The developments on the properties being worked by the Transvaal Consolidated, Lands, Rooiberg Development Company, and others practically assure a permanent industry.

The aggregate profits of the Witwatersrand mines for July amounted to £1,027,374. The month's development work gives a measurement equivalent to 15½ miles and marks another record.

The entire control of the Bantjes Consolidated is passing into the hands of Messrs. Eckstein & Co., their representative having been appointed chairman and the offices of the company transferred.

The new scheme for the amalgamation of the Nigel Deep with the Sub-Nigel is favourably criticised.

The Apex Mine and Benoni Consolidated have come to an agreement for the erection of a joint mill, capable of crushing 60,000 tons of ore per month, to be located on the former company's property. The developments on the Benoni property will ensure the supply of 20,000 tons per month to the first section of the mill as soon as erected.

The boring operations upon the Roberts-Randfontein property have resulted in striking a banket series at a depth of 1,950 feet.

In the Transvaal Government stope drill competition the Siskol drill has established a new record by accomplishing 132 feet in one shift.

Johannesburg.—At the annual meeting of the New Modderfontein Gold Mining Company, Mr. Samuel Evans, the acting chairman, stated that they anticipated that with the enlarged plant now working the costs for the current year would be substantially reduced. He forecasted a vigourous development policy, and stated that when the ore reserves had been sufficiently increased there would be such an enlargement of plant as would enable the present generation of shareholders to derive the maximum benefit from their extensive claim area. The recent development in their own property and in the Brakpan mine had proved the value of their deep-level ground. For the moment the rate of progress depended upon the supply of unskilled labour. It was impossible to forecast the condition of the South African labour market from month to month, but past experience justified them in concluding that in time they would get all the labour they wanted. Mr. Evans added that they were in the midst of an industrial revolution, the far-reaching effect of which on shareholders' dividends and on South African prosperity would only be fully appreciated in a few years' time. He pointed out that the largest companies crushed monthly per white employee an average of 95 tons, as against 85 for the smallest companies. Similarly the coloured labour of the large companies crushed 14 tons, as against 8 tons of the smallest companies. The number of coloured employees to one white employee was in the large companies 6.1 and in the small companies 10, thereby showing that the growth of the large concerns increased the proportion of Europeans employed, as compared with coloured labour, and improved the productivity of both classes of labour.