

Coal-mining.—In order to arrive at the average earnings of the miners we have to take the cost of hewing, haulage, screening, and loading, which may be fairly set down at an average of 6s. per ton. The average number of persons employed in connection with the coal-mines last year was 1846, the output of coal being 637,396 tons, the average earnings of the miners was £103 11s. 8d., as against £103 6s. 2d. for the previous year.

The number of persons employed working other minerals and in obtaining kauri gum cannot be accurately ascertained, but it is well known that the latter industry gives employment to a number of Europeans as well as to a large Native population.

OTHER MINERAL ORES.

Very little has yet been done towards prospecting or working mineral lodes in the colony other than those containing gold and silver. Comparatively small parcels of antimony, copper, manganese, and chrome ores have been from time to time exported to Europe for treatment, but the cost of transit to a port of shipment, freight, and other charges, have been so high that very little encouragement has hitherto been given to incur any large expenditure in the development of these ores.

ANTIMONY.

Antimony ore is found in many places in the North and Middle Islands, but the principal workings are situated between Endeavour Inlet and Port Gore. These workings were commenced by a syndicate formed in Wellington, who opened up a large lode of rich antimony ore, erected smelting-works, and turned out pure star antimony, but the price of the metal being low, they did not get sufficient return for the capital invested. They disposed of their property to the Endeavour Inlet Antimony Company, which was formed in London. This company has been sending the dressed ore to England for treatment. The total quantity of pure metal and dressed ore exported up to the 31st March last was 2,373 tons, representing a value of £36,190. During last year 515 tons of ore containing from 48 to 60 per cent. of antimony was exported by the Endeavour Inlet Company, having a value of £11,121.

COPPER.

Copper ore has been worked in the Island of Kawau in the Auckland District, also at the Dun Mountain and Anisecū Valley in the Nelson District. At the latter place the Champion Company opened up two mines, and erected smelting-works alongside the Roding River, but these works being defective in their construction, and the capital of the company exhausted, no mining operations have been carried on for the last four years. The total quantity of copper ore exported has amounted to 1,394 tons, having a value of £17,862.

MANGANESE.

Considerable quantities of manganese ore are found in the northern portion of the Auckland District. About 15,303 tons have been exported to other countries, having a value of £51,291. During last year the Colonial Manganese Company produced from Waiheke Island about 1,020 tons of ore, which is said to be worth £2 per ton, and 150 tons has been produced in the Whangarei district, having a value of £2 5s. per ton.

TIN.

The supposed rich discoveries of tin ore in Stewart Island made about two years and a half ago have unfortunately not yet been verified. Although there are small quantities of the ore to be found wherever there is any drift gravel covering the granite or gneiss formation on the northern portion of the island, it has never been found in anything like sufficient quantities to pay the expense of working, and there being only small areas of ground here and there where drift gravel can be found; this, together with the scarcity of water, precludes any extensive sluicing operations for saving and collecting the ore being undertaken.

KAURI GUM.

I now come to the production of kauri gum, which, although not a mineral in the strict sense of the term, is closely allied to one, inasmuch that it is difficult to state where the vegetable substance ends and the mineral one begins. It is well known that amber was once a vegetable resin, and also coal-deposits are formed from vegetable substances; but these have become so altered by fossilisation that they now belong to the mineral kingdom. Some of the kauri gum has been buried in the earth for such a length of time that it has become