

APPENDIX B

REPORTS RELATING TO THE INSPECTION OF COAL-MINES

The INSPECTING ENGINEER AND CHIEF INSPECTOR OF COAL-MINES to the UNDER-SECRETARY OF MINES.

Wellington, 10th August, 1950.

SIR,—

I have the honour to present my annual report on the coal-mining industry of New Zealand for the year ended 31st December, 1949.

OUTPUT

During 1949 production from all coal-mines was increased by 37,389 tons to a total of 2,813,275 tons. Opencast production showed an increase over 1948 of 65,259 tons to an output of 741,987 tons, 26 per cent. of the total production, while mined coal fell by 27,870 tons to 2,071,288 tons.

Table I gives details of coal raised, explosives used, shots fired, and men employed from the year 1941 onwards. "Explosives Used" figures for 1949 only are shown in this table.

ACCIDENTS

It is encouraging to note that deaths due to accident at coal-mines during 1949, both surface and underground, have been held to the low figure of three. This is the best result since 1935, and is creditable to the efforts of all in the industry to adopt safe methods. What is not so encouraging is the fact that all three deaths were due to falls of coal or stone, one of them a fall of stone at the face, the others falls of stone and coal while repairing and shotfiring respectively back from the face. One of the fatalities occurred in the Northern District, the other two on the West Coast.

Of the twenty-five serious accidents—that is, accidents which must be notified under section 145 of the Coal-mines Act, 1925—nine were due to falls of coal or stone at the face and one was due to a fall of stone on a roadway away from the face. There were seven haulage accidents.

Though the total number of serious accidents is the lowest since 1942, it is capable of considerable improvement, and the attention of every one employed underground is drawn to the need for concentration on safe methods, good lighting, and constant care at the face and on haulage roads to effect this.

Table II deals with the incidence of fatal accidents on the basis of tonnage raised and men employed over the period 1941 to 1949.

Table III gives the causes of fatal and serious accidents respectively during the same period.

REPORTS ON ACCIDENTS

In an attempt to institute a month by month report on the causes of mine accidents in the different inspection districts, Inspectors of Coal-mines were asked to obtain and forward early in each month accident reports from their districts.

Table IV gives total accidents involving three days' absence or more from work for the year ended 31st March, 1950, but it is intended in future years to publish annually total accidents for each calendar year.