

SESSION II.
1906.
NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT.

BY THE HON. JAMES MCGOWAN, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,

I have the honour to present my seventh annual Statement to Parliament, and in doing so it affords me pleasure to be able to refer to the substantial increase in the production of precious metals and minerals, the gold-export being the highest for thirty-five years, and £580,763 in excess of the year 1899, when I assumed control of the Department.

The coal-output continues to increase steadily. Considerable activity is being shown with regard to opening up new leases on the west coast of the Middle Island, so that it is reasonable to anticipate a greatly augmented output in the near future.

The State Coal-mines show increased returns for the year, and in this connection I may mention the establishment of retail coal-depots at Wellington and Christchurch, at both of which places there is a greater demand for coal than the depots can cope with. Arrangements will, however, shortly be made to open subsidiary depots.

Reports are being obtained as to the desirableness of opening depots in other centres.

A briquette plant is in course of erection at Westport for the utilisation of the soft coal from the Seddonville Coal-mine, which is now a waste commodity.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS.

Since the reorganization of the Geological Survey under the directorship of Dr. J. M. Bell, M.A., Ph.D., detailed geological surveys have been undertaken in three parts of the colony—namely, in North Westland, in Central Otago, and in the Hauraki Peninsula. During the season 1905–6, the Hokitika Subdivision of North Westland—an area stretching from the Town of Hokitika to the Alpine Divide, and containing about five hundred square miles—was carefully mapped, geologically and topographically. As the report on this subdivision will show, deposits of talc, serpentine, asbestos, and greenstone were found in this area, in addition to auriferous and platiniferous veins. The Alexandra Subdivision of Central Otago was examined and mapped by Professor James Park, F.G.S., and a report will shortly be issued on this area. The work on the Coromandel Subdivision of the Hauraki Peninsula has made good progress, but is not yet complete.