

1913.
NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT,

BY THE HON. W. FRASER, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

I have the honour to present to Parliament the Mines Statement for the year ended the 31st December, 1912.

The value of the mineral output for the year amounted to £3,042,224, as against £3,492,403 during 1911, being a decrease of £450,179, such decrease being due to the disastrous strikes by which the mines at Waihi, Reefton, and Blackwater—our most productive quartz-mining fields—were rendered idle from May to November. The shortage in the value of bullion from the mines affected is estimated at £450,000.

The value of the bullion produced from our gold-mines amounted to £1,429,870 for the year, as against £1,948,369 for 1911. Dividends paid during 1912 by registered gold-mining companies amounted to £368,638.

The output of coal amounted to 2,177,615 tons, being an increase of 111,542 tons above that of the previous year.

Satisfactory increases also occurred in the value of the kauri-gum and scheelite exported during 1912.

The most important development during the past year has been in connection with drilling operations in search of petroleum in the North Island, where six companies equipped with modern rotary drills are now engaged. The second Government bonus of £2,500 has been won by the Taranaki Oil-wells (Limited) upon their producing 500,000 gallons of crude petroleum from their Moturoa wells, where the company recently laid down a refinery for the treatment of their crude oil.

In the Provincial District of Marlborough a beginning has at last been made to establish the mining industry on a scale of some magnitude. The Dominion Consolidated Company have developed at Wakamarina a promising gold-scheelite lode, and have installed a treatment plant. Towards the end of the year crushing was commenced, with satisfactory results.

On the Ohinemuri River the Waihi-Paeroa Gold-extraction Company, having installed works of considerable magnitude for the treatment of tailings discharged into that river from the Waihi and Karangahake mines, experienced most satisfactory results, obtaining bullion to the value of £33,811, which enabled the payment of a substantial dividend.

On the Buller Coalfield an important development of a new coal area has been made by the Westport-Stockton Coal Company, who, by means of drilling, have located a block of workable bituminous coal, in extent about 600 acres, and containing at least 9,000,000 tons of coal. This discovery having been connected by electric tramway to the company's main haulage-system, the prospects of the company have materially improved.

At Ross work has been resumed by the Ross Goldfields (Reconstructed) (Limited) upon the once-famous deep leads at Ross Flat. With systematic development there is a reasonable prospect of an important mine being established.