

The Taranaki Oil-wells (Limited) towards the end of the year furnished evidence that one million gallons of marketable crude oil had been produced from its wells during a period of about eight years, and in consequence was awarded the Government bonus offered for the first production of that quantity of crude oil. The total bonus gained by that company amounts to £10,000. Of the above quantity of oil 532,745 gallons was fed to the company refinery.

Drilling operations during 1915 were confined to enlarging existing wells preparatory to carrying them to greater depths than hitherto attained with the hope of tapping more copious oil-bearing strata. Other well-drilling operations in the Dominion were intermittent and without result.

#### PERSONS ENGAGED IN MINING.

The number of persons employed in and about the mines of the Dominion during 1915 is estimated at 8,361, or 843 less than the number employed during the previous year. The number employed at metalliferous mines was 4,205, and at coal-mines 4,156. The number of gum-diggers is not known.

The following table shows the number of miners in each inspection district, and the branch of mining in which they are engaged :—

Classification.	Inspection District.			Totals.		
	Northern.	West Coast.	Southern.	1915.	1914.	Decrease.
Gold, silver, and scheelite ..	1,872	1,356	965	4,193	4,444	251
Coal .. ..	903	2,322	931	4,156	4,734	578
Other minerals .. ..	6	..	6	12	26	14
Totals .. ..	2,781	3,678	1,902	8,361	9,204	843

In view of the considerable number of miners, especially of coal-miners, who have enlisted for military service, the decrease in the number of persons employed at mines is not great, but the shortage is felt at those collieries where there is considerable demand for coal.

#### MINING ACCIDENTS.

The number of lives lost at metalliferous mines during 1915 was ten, the proportion of deaths per 1,000 persons employed being 2·38. At collieries nine lives were lost, being at the rate of 2·16 per 1,000 persons employed.

At those operations which are regulated by the Stone-quarries Act, 1910, seven lives were accidentally lost, and the total number of persons employed at such operations was about 1,600. It appears necessary that the inspection of quarries should be differently organized, for at present this work is distributed among officials of the Public Works and Mines Departments resident in the districts in which quarries are worked, and these officials carry out, more or less, the inspection of quarries in addition to their principal duties, without extra remuneration. There is no Chief Inspector of Stone-quarries, and it appears advisable that such an appointment should be made.

#### GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Though somewhat weakened owing to the absence of two members of the staff with the Expeditionary Forces, the Geological Survey Branch has steadily carried on its work during the past year. The detailed geological surveys of the Egmont (Taranaki) and Gisborne subdivisions by members of the regular staff have been brought to a conclusion. Special surveys of the Oamaru and Tuapeka districts have been made by Professors J. Park and P. Marshall. Reports on all these areas are in course of preparation. Officers of the Survey have also visited a number of localities in order to make brief geological examinations and to furnish special reports on such subjects as limestone, phosphate-deposits, &c.