

1917.  
NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT

BY THE HON. W. D. S. MacDONALD, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

I have the honour to present to Parliament the Mines Statement for the year ended the 31st December, 1916.

The value of minerals exported, together with that of the coal-output for 1916, amounted to £2,978,436, as compared with £3,374,523 for 1915, being a decrease of £396,087 (or 11·7 per cent.). It is satisfactory, however, to state that the decrease is more apparent than real, and is confined almost wholly to gold, the export of which during 1915 was inflated by the shipment of gold accumulated during the latter part of 1914, but prohibited from export by statute.

The production of coal, kauri-gum, tungsten-ore, and other mineral substances, including the output from our stone-quarries, has considerably increased, notwithstanding the abnormal conditions caused by the Great War and the shortage of labour.

The output of coal amounted to 2,257,135 tons, being an increase of 48,511 tons above that of the previous year, and, with the exception of that of 1914, constitutes a record for the Dominion. The output per person employed underground amounted to 750 tons, which is the highest attained in New Zealand, and has been exceeded on only one occasion in Australasia, and then only by 1 ton.

The value of tungsten-ore exported during the year, which also constituted a record, amounted to £49,070, as against £27,784 for the previous year. Though this increase must be attributed partly to the increased price paid by the Imperial Government for this commandeered mineral, it is in the main due to greater production.

MINERAL - PRODUCTION.

The following table shows the quantity and value of gold, silver, and other minerals, coal, and kauri-gum exported during the years 1915 and 1916, also the quantity of native coal consumed in the Dominion during the same periods :—

Product.	Year ended			
	31st December, 1915.		31st December, 1916.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
Gold ... ..	422,825 oz.*	£ 1,694,553*	292,620 oz.	£ 1,199,212
Silver ... ..	957,541 " *	95,583*	787,053 "	85,111
Tungsten-ore ... ..	194 tons	27,784	266 tons	49,070
Mixed minerals ... ..	3,450 "	5,377	7,335 "	14,614
New Zealand coal exported ...	323,992 "	329,731	328,183 "	326,553
New Zealand coal used in New Zealand	1,884,632 "	942,316	1,928,952 "	964,476
Kauri-gum ... ..	4,575 "	279,133	5,448 "	339,343
Coke ... ..	23 "	46	33 "	57
Total value for 1916 ... ..				£ 2,978,436*
" 1915 ... ..				£ 3,374,523

\* The value of the bullion produced as stated in the official returns from the mines amounted to £1,192,197.