

The comparative tonnage of the various classes of coal for the years 1915 and 1916 is summarized as follows :—

Class.	Output for 1916.	Output for 1915.	Increase or Decrease for 1916.	
	Tons.	Tons.		Tons.
Bituminous and semi-bituminous coal ..	1,422,074	1,404,400	<i>Increase</i>	17,674
Brown coal	653,898	725,001	<i>Decrease</i>	71,103
Lignite	181,163	79,223	<i>Increase</i>	101,940
Totals	2,257,135	2,208,624	Increase	48,511

The coal-production, satisfactory as it is, would have been greater had the coal-miners continued to maintain the maximum output, but unfortunately the output was considerably curtailed during November and December in several of the mines.

This restriction, which became more general during February and March of the current year, culminated in strikes lasting a fortnight or more in several coal-mining districts. I am glad to be able to say, however, that since the resumption of work no trace of the go-slow policy has been seen, and the output of all the mines has been normal.

TUNGSTEN-ORE (SCHEELITE).

The quantity and value of tungsten-ore exported during 1916 constitutes a record, amounting to 266 tons, value £49,070, as compared with 194 tons, value £27,784, during 1915. Owing to the commandeering by the Imperial Government at a fixed import price of £2 15s. per unit (1 per cent.) of tungstic acid—an increase of about 80 per cent. above the average *ante bellum* price—there has been increased activity in mining and prospecting for scheelite and other tungsten minerals during the year. The principal operations have been carried out in the locality of Glenorchy, where scheelite-quartz lodes have been found to extend from Mount Judah, in the Richardson Range, which flanks Lake Wakatipu, to the eastward to the Dart River, westward of Paradise, a distance of about twelve miles, and to occur at varying altitudes up to 5,000 ft. above the lake. The known ore-deposits are, however, too small and intermittent to warrant any large capital expenditure for their exploitation, and the present method of operation by small and economically managed mines may be commended.

SULPHUR.

During the year inquiries were made on behalf of the Imperial Government as to the price at which sulphur could be shipped from New Zealand; as a result of such inquiries an inspection was made, and a report was supplied to me, of which the following is a brief summary :—

Native sulphur in sufficient quantity to be profitably worked is known to occur only in the thermal districts of the North Island (near Rotorua and Lake Taupo), and at White Island. The most extensive deposits occur at Tauhara North, near Taupo. With the exception of the small lake deposit on White Island, all the known native sulphur is reported to occur in the form of pockets in pumice or sinter around fumaroles or thermal springs.

These deposits, although of high grade generally, are small in comparison with those of massive form in seams or veins as extensively worked in Japan, Sicily, and North America. Owing to the nature of the deposits and to transport difficulties it is unlikely that sulphur can, under normal conditions, be exported from New Zealand to compete with the supplies of the above-mentioned countries. Since the beginning of the present year, however, sulphur has risen to very high prices in the London market.

Prior to 1898 there was no separate record kept of the quantity of native sulphur exported from New Zealand; between 1898 and 1902, however, 4,727 tons, value