

sanction. Accordingly the Department has made representations in many directions with the object of assisting New Zealand importers to secure the execution and shipment of orders placed abroad. It is satisfactory to state that the representations made have, in all but exceptional cases, been favourably considered by the authorities to whom they have been addressed. The total number of applications dealt with was 7,500, representing a value of £3,659,700.

WAR RELIEF FUNDS.

During the past financial year the public has contributed most liberally to the various overseas relief funds, and the Sick and Wounded Soldiers' Funds administered in the Dominion have been maintained at a standard sufficient to meet the ever-increasing calls upon them.

The amounts contributed through the Government by the people of the Dominion to the various relief funds are as follow :—

	For the Year ended 31st March, 1918.	For the Period since the Outbreak of War.
	£	£
Belgian Relief Fund	5,991	311,121
Other Belgian Funds	3,650	6,436
For other Allies	4,018	22,357
Civil relief in Great Britain	4,593	11,786
British Red Cross Fund	116,668	187,422
British Navy Relief	5,787	98,238
New Zealand Hospital Ship Fund	194	63,747
New Zealand Comforts Fund	56,879	128,277
New Zealand War Relief Fund	702	15,980
For equipment (aeroplanes, ambulances, &c.)	1,500	9,403
For regimental funds	2,325	2,736
For local war funds	76	7,640
For sundry overseas funds	996	1,477
Total voluntary subscriptions	203,379	866,620
Government contribution to Belgian Relief Funds	228,145
Total	<u>£203,379</u>	<u>£1,094,765</u>

The above figures do not represent the total contributions from the Dominion, as the value in cash and goods contributed by private individuals or institutions and forwarded direct is not ascertainable.

The total amount raised by patriotic societies in the Dominion since the outbreak of war to the 31st March, 1918, reached £3,806,221, of which £1,695,766 remained in the hands of societies. This latter sum was invested principally in connection with relief for sick and wounded soldiers and their dependants, the demands on which will increase rapidly with the return of the men now on active service.

The estimated value of goods, stock, produce, and comforts shipped overseas by the Internal Affairs Department on behalf of donors to the 31st March, 1918, amounted to £502,181.

MINING

The value of minerals produced in the Dominion during 1917 was £2,589,817, and the value of minerals exported during the same period was £2,496,870, these figures being respectively £297,018 and £482,105 less than those of the previous year.

Taking into consideration the great disadvantage under which the mining industry has been carried out during 1917, the fourth year of the war, the production of minerals has been well maintained. The decline is chiefly due to the shortage of labour and the cessation of operations at many small gold-mining claims owing to the increased cost of everything employed in the production of gold, while the value of gold has remained stationary.