

The coal exported is mainly for bunkering steamers trading to New Zealand, and for Admiralty purposes. The amount of exports has crept steadily up from the year 1866, when over a quarter of a million tons was sent away; but its value since the middle "eighties," when it attained 1 per cent. of the value of the total exports, has remained in almost constant ratio to that total. The marked increase in the "eighties" was due to Government endowment of the two West Coast coal ports, Greymouth and Westport, the institution of their Harbour Boards in 1884, and the improvements effected under the engineering schemes of Sir John Coode and the Boards' own engineers.

The amount of coal imported showed very little change till the last dozen years. In 1913 and 1914 the yearly figures were more than double those for 1878, and in 1912 and 1915 almost double. The value of the importation has increased in much greater proportion than the amount. The percentage which that value is of the value of our total imports has varied more than the corresponding figures for the export of coal.

TABLE 10.—RATIO OF VALUE OF COAL-IMPORTS INTO NEW ZEALAND TO VALUE OF TOTAL IMPORTS.

1882-83	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 per cent.
1884 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3 "
1885-95	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 "
1896-1907	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 "
1908-9	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 "
1910-11	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 "
1912-13	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 "
1914 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3 "
1917-18	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 "

Whilst the proportion which our coal-export is of our total exports has remained practically constant at 1 per cent., coal as an import has in recent normal years been slightly increasing its relative importance in the sum of imports. The proportion of the total coal consumed in the Dominion which is furnished by imported coal was comparatively large in early years (from one-third to one-fourth about 1880); it diminished till in 1900 it was about 10 per cent.; ten years later the proportion was much the same as in 1900; but subsequently it increased rapidly, and for 1914 imported coal provided more than one-fifth of the total consumption. During the war period, with the shortage of shipping, the proportion fell, till for 1918 it was not quite one-eighth. The great bulk of the imported coal comes from the Newcastle fields in New South Wales, and is specialized to certain uses, mainly railway transport and gas-making. The coal imported from 1878 to 1918 inclusive amounted to 7,524,000 tons, or a little over one-seventh of the amount of coal consumed in New Zealand during that period, and a little over 15½ per cent. of the amount produced within the Dominion.

The presence of large supplies of coal in Australia readily available for importation at a reasonable price has undoubtedly been one factor in preventing the appearance of monopoly in New Zealand coal-mining.

(viii.) OWNERSHIP OF COAL-SITES.

The land at present mined is owned in part by the Crown and in part by private individuals or corporations. The greater part of the more valuable coals are produced from Crown lands or lands vested in some public body, such as Harbour Boards, schools, and colleges. For some years past the policy of the Government has been to reserve to the Crown the ownership of all lands known to possess minerals or, wherever other rights appertaining to the land are alienated or temporarily transferred, to retain ownership of the minerals. The Coal-mines Act gives power to the Crown to resume private lands for coal-mining purposes on payment of compensation. Some of the companies at present operating own part of their fields, but the major portion of these are leased either from the Crown or private owners, in which case rents or royalties, calculated per ton mined, or rents merging into royalties, are paid.

2. HISTORICAL NOTE.

The existence of coal in certain parts of New Zealand was known shortly after organized settlement began. The history of the industry falls into three periods: up to the early "eighties," thence up to the end of the century, and from then to the present day. The first was a time of exploration, experiment, and many failures; the second, one of struggle against adverse circumstances, leading to consolidation of ownership of mines and the utilization of other valuable results of experience; the third, one of comparative but not unqualified success.

The first mention of coal on what are now the chief mining fields of the Dominion was made by Heaphy and Brunner in 1846, who discovered outcrops of lignite in the Westport district. Next year Brunner found coal on the Grey River on the present site of Brunnerton. Bituminous coal was discovered in the late "fifties"; and in the early "sixties" coal-mining began in both the Grey and the Westport districts. A certain amount of coal was exported from New Zealand in 1866.

TABLE 11.—EARLY EXPORTS OF COAL FROM NEW ZEALAND.

Year.		Tons.	Year.		Tons.
1866	..	261	1871	..	1,696
1867	..	973	1872	..	990
1868	..	1,027	1873	..	724
1869	..	750	1874	..	1,463
1870	..	1,672			