

CINNABAR.

The mining of cinnabar and production of quicksilver therefrom has been carried on by one company during the year, and 11,175 lb. of quicksilver was produced, worth £2,794. The Mines Department is assisting the company to further test the lode on its property by boring, and it is expected that this branch of the mining industry will show a considerable improvement in the near future.

PERSONS ENGAGED IN MINING.

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

Classification.	Inspection District.			Totals.		
	Northern.	West Coast.	Southern.	1919.	1918.	Decrease.
Gold, silver, and tungsten ore ..	1,153	589	443	2,185	2,566	381
Coal	939	1,891	1,114	3,944	3,994	50
Cinnabar and asbestos	14	2	..	16	16	..
Totals	2,106	2,482	1,557	6,145	6,576	431

The scarcity of coal-miners is severely felt on all the coalfields. Possibly with the recent considerable increase in wages some coal-miners who have given up that occupation, also some gold-miners, may go into the coal-pits. If this does not occur the scarcity of coal will continue, for at present there are quite a thousand coal-miners too few to efficiently man our existing collieries and to supply our requirements.

STONE-QUARRIES.

It is satisfactory to note that there has been a large increase in the output of stone-quarries during the year, and that this industry is now of great importance to the Dominion. Until the Stone-quarries Act is amended it is impossible to ascertain the value of stone produced, as the Act does not at present require owners of quarries to furnish returns.

PHOSPHATE ROCK.

The quantity of phosphate rock quarried during the year was 4,000 tons, as against 5,000 tons for 1918 and 5,050 for 1917. The total quantity produced by the Ewing Phosphate Company to the end of 1919 is 116,522 tons.

COAL-MINING.

The output of coal during 1919 amounted to 1,847,848 tons, as compared with 2,034,250 tons during 1918, being a decrease of 186,402 tons.

The following is a comparative statement of the coal and lignite raised during the years 1917, 1918, and 1919 :—

Inspection District.	Output for 1918.	Output for 1919.	Increase or Decrease, 1919.	Output for 1917.	Increase or Decrease between Years 1918 and 1917.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Northern	549,778	511,451	38,327†	470,638	79,140*
West Coast	997,089	845,826	151,263†	1,146,778	149,689†
Southern (Canterbury, Otago, and Southland)	487,383	490,571	3,188*	451,003	36,380*
Totals	2,034,250	1,847,848	186,402†	2,068,419	34,169†

* Increase. † Decrease.

The decrease in the coal-production was due to organized restriction of work by miners on the Grey, Buller, and Waikato coalfields. By such policy the output per person employed below ground declined from 703 tons during 1918 to 648 tons during 1919; and a coal-famine was produced by which railway traffic was