

The quantity of coal imported into the Dominion constituted a record, being 476,343 tons, as against 391,434 tons during 1919. The quantity of coal exported amounted to 80,088 tons, as against 150,293 tons during the previous year.

PERSONS EMPLOYED IN OR ABOUT MINES AND STONE-QUARRIES.

The following table shows the number of persons employed in each inspection district during 1919 and 1920 :—

Classification.	Inspection District.			Totals.		
	Northern.	West Coast.	Southern.	1920.	1919.	Increase or Decrease.
Gold, silver, and tungsten ore ..	1,058	484	372	1,914	2,185	<i>Dec.</i> 271
Cinnabar and asbestos	15	1	..	16	16	..
Coal	990	1,894	1,194	4,078	3,944	<i>Inc.</i> 134
Stone-quarries	972	144	352	1,468	1,409	<i>Inc.</i> 59
Totals	3,035	2,523	1,918	7,476	7,554	<i>Dec.</i> 78

The shortage of coal-miners which has been experienced during and since the war is now much less acute, the deficiency being made up by gold-miners and by new arrivals.

MINING AND QUARRY ACCIDENTS.

The year 1920 has been the most immune from mining and quarry accidents since such industries were established in the Dominion, only two fatal accidents having occurred in connection with coal and metalliferous mining, and none at stone-quarries.

Upon those industries 7,476 persons were ordinarily employed during the year. The proportion of fatal accidents per 1,000 persons employed was 0·26.

At metalliferous mines one serious accident occurred, resulting in the loss of one life; at such mines the proportion of fatal accidents per 1,000 persons employed was 0·51.

At stone-quarries, at which 1,468 persons were employed, the only serious accident consisted of a broken arm.

In or about coal-mines only one fatal accident occurred, such being due to the neglect of the sufferer, a co-operative miner, to erect timber support to the roof under which he was working. The proportion of fatal accidents per 1,000 persons employed at collieries was 0·24, and per 1,000,000 tons raised 0·54, being the lowest fatal-accident rate in the Dominion for thirty-four years, and but one-third of the lowest proportion ever attained at the collieries of the United Kingdom, which are among the most immune from colliery accidents in proportion to the number of persons employed.

STATE AID TO MINING.

Extensive use continues to be made of the Government prospecting-drills, which are lent to hirers free of charge. During the year six parties employed these drills, an aggregate of 6,822 ft. being bored in search of coal, alluvial gold, and cinnabar lodes. A workable area of coal was thus proved in Canterbury, and the continuation of a cinnabar lode was proved in North Auckland.

During the year ended 31st March, 1921, eighteen approved prospecting parties were granted subsidies amounting to £6,545, of which £1,456 was expended during the year; in addition to which £697 granted during previous years was expended during the past financial year. Upon these operations 122 persons were intermittently employed during the year, practically the whole of the prospecting operations in the Dominion being now subsidized by the Government.

A discovery of interest was made during the early part of the current year on Block XV, Waitahu Survey District, an outlying portion of the Inangahua Goldfield, by two Government-subsidized prospectors, Messrs. James Hurley and