

In or about coal-mines, at which 4,556 persons were ordinarily employed, it is regretted that five fatal accidents occurred whereby six persons lost their lives. Thirty other persons received serious injuries.

At all the mines and quarries the proportion of fatal accidents was 1·1 per 1,000 persons employed. For the preceding year the percentage was 1·5 per 1,000 persons employed.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

During the past year detailed geological surveys were continued in the Dargaville, Waipatu, and North Taranaki districts. The total area surveyed was somewhat over 1,100 square miles. In each of the districts mentioned the field surveys were brought to a close, and full reports on the work done are now being prepared. Further examination of the Waihi Goldfield was undertaken, with results considered on the whole to be satisfactory. A detailed report thereon has been furnished and will shortly be published. In the South Island the asbestos-field at the head of the Takaka River near Mount Arthur was examined in some detail. The report supplied indicates that the asbestos deposits offer considerable promise, provided the drawbacks due to their situation in rough high country difficult of access can be overcome. Steady progress has been made with the investigation of the fossil collections of the survey, a work which is considered highly important by scientific men, and a palæontological bulletin, No. 9 ("The Upper Cretaceous Gastropods of New Zealand"), was issued during the year.

The other publications issued during the year included the annual report of the Survey, which contains a certain amount of scientific information as well as an account of the work done, and Bulletins Nos. 24 and 25. Bulletin No. 24 described the geology and mineral resources (chiefly coal and limestone) of the Mokau district, and gave also accounts of the Te Kuiti district and of the Waitewhena coalfield, north Taranaki. Bulletin No. 25 dealt with the Collingwood district, the coal and marble deposits of which received full attention. The coal resources, though considerable, were found to be hardly as large as was hoped. On the other hand, an area north of the Township of Collingwood containing marbles of great possible value has been mapped and made known to those interested. The Parapara iron-ores, south-west of Collingwood, some miles outside the area handled in Bulletin No. 25, were described as long ago as 1907 in Bulletin No. 3 of the Survey.

STATE AID TO MINING.

Government prospecting-drills were utilized by four parties during the year, an aggregate of 3,673 ft. being drilled. In the search for building-marble at Takaka fairly satisfactory results were obtained, a workable coal-seam was proved at Dobson, near Greymouth, and one of the co-operative coal-mining parties used a drill to prospect their lease on the State Coal Reserve at Dunollie with partial success. Boring was also continued at Tucker Flat to further prove the alluvial deposit.

During the year ended 31st March, 1923, twenty-nine new applications by approved prospecting-parties were granted subsidies amounting to £3,280. There was expended during the year £2,504, which included subsidies authorized but not expended during previous years. Upon these operations ninety-nine persons were intermittently employed.

The expenditure on roads and tracks by subsidies and direct grants out of the Public Works Fund vote, "Roads on Goldfields," during the year amounted to £4,850, as against £11,329 during the previous year.

The expenditure by the Mines Department on schools of mines for the year amounted to £4,457.

The Waimea-Kumara and Mount Ida Government Water-races, which in past years considerably aided alluvial-gold mining in the Kumara and Naseby districts, have during the year ended 31st March, 1923, supplied claims employing twenty-three miners with water for sluicing, by which gold to the approximate value of £5,743 was obtained. The cash received for water sold amounted to £1,157 3s., the expenditure on the upkeep of the races being £2,085.