

MINERS' PHTHISIS ACT, 1915.

The benefits under this Act are administered by the Pensions Department, and the following is a statement supplied by the Commissioner of Pensions showing the amount and the number of pensions payable, in force, and granted to the 31st March, 1927 :—

Amounts paid since inception until 31st March, 1927 :—

	£
From 1st November, 1915, to 31st March, 1926	259,238
For year ended 31st March, 1927	41,940
	<hr/> £301,178 <hr/>
Number of new grants for year 1926-27	84
Annual value of new grants	£5,733
Number of pensions in force at 31st March, 1927 ..	668
Annual value of pensions in force at 31st March, 1927	£42,084
Average pension payable per annum	£63
Total number of pensions granted to 31st March, 1927	1,343
Total number of pensions granted to 31st March, 1927, includes the following :—	
To unmarried miners	253
To married miners	523
To widows of miners	567
	<hr/> 1,343 <hr/>

INVESTIGATIONS, NEW ZEALAND COALS.

No special investigations on New Zealand coals were carried out during the year in the Dominion Laboratory. The Department, however, deputed the Assistant Dominion Analyst (Mr. W. Donovan), who was abroad, to make inquiries in America and Great Britain *re* the determination of inflammability of coal-dust, and also the production of oil from coal by low-temperature carbonization and other methods. A visit was paid to the Experimental Station of the Bureau of Mines, U.S.A., at Pittsburgh, and some knowledge gained of the methods employed in determining the inflammability of coal-dust in the special mine developed for the purpose, and of the working of the ingenious instruments by which the velocity of the explosion-wave, the pressure attained, and the velocity and duration of the flame are determined. The British station, which had been transferred to Buxton from Eskmeals, was also inspected. At both places the inflammability of New Zealand sub-bituminous (or brown) coals was specially discussed with the principals.

The Fuel Research Station at Greenwich afforded an insight into some thorough methods of research having as their object the better utilization of fuel, including low-temperature carbonization. A visit to some of the coal-fields of Germany gave additional information.

It is hoped to resume coal investigations at the Dominion Laboratory at an early date, when the knowledge thus acquired by Mr. Donovan will be of considerable value.

COAL-MINERS' RELIEF FUND.

Under the provisions of the Coal-mines Act, 1925, Miners' Sick and Accident Funds were abolished, and from the 1st April, 1926, all accident relief payments were made from the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, which is administered by the Public Trustee. Committees of miners called Coal-miners' Relief Fund Local Committees were established in some of the coal-mining centres to assist the Public Trustee in the administration of the fund. After allowing for the transfer of the various Sick and Accident Funds to the Coal-miners' Relief