

Number of new grants for year 1927-28	..	..	104
Annual value of new grants	..	..	£7,586
Number of pensions in force at 31st March, 1928	..	..	721
Annual value of pensions in force at 31st March, 1928	..	..	£45,773
Average pension payable per annum	..	..	£63.48
Total number of pensions granted to 31st March, 1928			1,447
Total number of pensions granted to 31st March, 1928, includes the following:—			
To unmarried miners	..	..	271
To married miners	..	..	578
To widows of miners	..	..	598
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			1,447
			<hr/>

#### INVESTIGATIONS, NEW ZEALAND COALS.

The research work on coal carried out at the Dominion Laboratory for the Department consisted chiefly of the examination of samples of carbonized residue, briquettes, and oil, resulting from the low-temperature carbonization of several tons of Waikato slack, by the Rolle process at Halle, Germany. The results confirmed those obtained at the Imperial Institute, London, by Sir Richard Redmayne, and published in his report on the carbonization tests. Members of the staff acted on the committee which discussed various problems arising out of the report.

During the year a Coal Research Association was formed, on which the Mines Department is represented, and research on coal formerly undertaken at the suggestion of and in co-operation with the Department is now being carried out under the direction of the Association.

The low-temperature carbonization of some brown coals at various temperatures has been investigated, using the Gray-King laboratory apparatus, and also a small aluminium Fischer retort.

To enable larger-scale tests to be carried out, a Fischer rotary retort, to hold a charge of from 20 lb. to 30 lb. of coal, has now been installed, with the necessary pumps, gas-holder, and other accessories. This will be in operation shortly. Special attention will be paid to the oil obtained by the process.

#### COAL-MINERS' RELIEF FUND.

As mentioned in my last statement, all accident-relief payments are now made from the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, which is administered by the Public Trustee, the Miners' Sick and Accident Funds having been abolished as from the 1st April, 1926, and incorporated in the Coal-miners' Relief Fund.

Notwithstanding that the Public Trustee increased the rate of interest on the funds held by him by  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the Relief Fund shows a diminution of £712 0s. 1d. as at 31st March, 1928, as against a diminution of £203 14s. 1d. as at 31st March, 1927. This has been occasioned by the increased payments made during the year.

The interest earned for the twelve months ended 31st March, 1928, was £1,365 1s., as against £1,140 19s. 3d. for the previous year, while for the same periods the income from the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton contribution was £5,072 18s. 1d. and £4,213 14s. 11d. respectively. In addition the sum of £2 12s. 1d. was reccredited to the Fund on account of vouchers reccredited.

The total expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1928, amounted to £7,152 11s. 3d., as against £5,584 12s. 10d. for the previous year.

The amount standing to the credit of the Fund as at the 31st March last was £26,156 11s. 2d., as against £26,868 11s. 3d. at the 31st March, 1927.

#### STATE COLLIERIES.

##### HOUSING.

With the object of enabling reputable miners and other employees working at the State collieries to erect and own their own homes a housing scheme was introduced by the Government several years ago, but it was not until last year that the employees availed themselves of the opportunity thus offered.