

PERSONS EMPLOYED IN OR ABOUT MINES AND STONE-QUARRIES.

The following table shows the number of persons employed in each inspection district during 1931 and 1930 :—

Classification.	Inspection District.			Totals.		
	Northern (North Island).	West Coast (of South Island).	Southern (rest of South Island).	1931.	1930.	Increase or Decrease.
Gold, silver, and tungsten ore	716	507	647	1,870	1,564	Inc. 306
Ironstone .. .. .	..	25	..	25	120	Dec. 95
Cinnabar	58	..	..	58	54	Inc. 4
Sulphur .. .. .	..	..	..	..	25	Dec. 25
Coal	2,061	2,747	937	5,745	5,867	„ 122
Stone-quarries under the Stone- quarries Act	1,441	180	374	1,995	1,958	Inc. 37
Oil	50	..	6	56	51	„ 5
Silica-sand .. .. .	..	..	1	1	2	Dec. 1
Totals	4,326	3,459	1,965	9,750	9,641	Inc. 109

MINING AND QUARRY ACCIDENTS.

In metalliferous mines, at which 1,954 men were ordinarily employed, one person was killed and four persons seriously injured.

At stone-quarries under the Stone-quarries Act, employing 1,995 men, there was one fatal accident and five serious accidents.

In coal-mines, where 5,745 persons were ordinarily employed, four persons were killed and seventeen persons seriously injured.

CO-OPERATIVE MINING, STATE COAL RESERVE.

Seventeen co-operative parties working portions of the State Coal Reserve near Greymouth produced during the year 1931 108,220 tons, the number of men employed being 130. During the previous year the same number of parties produced 104,209 tons, there being an increase this year of 4,011 tons.

A comparison of the coal produced by these men shows that the average production per man employed is much greater than the average production at many of the large mines in the Dominion. Moreover, the men employed in the co-operative mines usually take more pains in preparing their places and so mine the coal as to produce a greater proportion of larger coal than is the case at many of the other mines.

STATE COAL-MINES.

Notwithstanding the intense competition and a smaller output from each of the two State coal-mines, the profit made for the year ended 31st March, 1932, was £16,032, after providing for interest and depreciation. Of that amount £7,886 was transferred to the Sinking Fund and £5,000 was transferred to the Consolidated Fund on account of past administrative services, leaving a balance of £3,146 in the Profit and Loss Account.

I am pleased to say that in spite of the decreased business the Department did not, so as to ensure less idle time, dismiss the excess number of men employed.

The operations of the State coal-mines and State coal-depots for the year are briefly reviewed hereunder.

OUTPUT AND SALES.

The operations of the State coal-mines and State coal-depots for the year ended 31st March, 1932, are briefly reviewed hereunder.

Liverpool Colliery.—The gross output for the year was 120,561 tons, as compared with 131,103 tons for last year, a reduction of 10,542 tons.

James Colliery.—The gross output for the year was 38,018 tons, as compared with 42,391 tons for last year, a reduction of 4,373 tons.