

HOUSING.

Thirty-five loans have been granted to miners and others, under the Department's housing scheme, to enable the workmen to erect and own their own houses. The loans, which range from £250 to £300, are repayable, together with interest, by fortnightly instalments over a term of twenty years.

SOCIAL AMENITIES AT MINING TOWNSHIPS.

During last year grants were authorized from the State Coal-mines Account to assist the Runanga Borough Council in maintaining streets and for street-lighting; also a grant was authorized for improvements to the croquet-lawn.

The Glen Afton Collieries, Ltd., provided the means for concreting a public tennis-court at Glen Afton, and the Renown Collieries, Ltd., provided ground and labour for the construction of a tennis-court near the mine at Renown Township.

The amenities previously provided are being well maintained and patronized, and are proving very popular in the communities adjacent to the mines.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

During the 1931-32 field season the Geological Survey completed the detailed examination of the Te Kuiti district and continued the mapping of the Eketahuna Subdivision. Owing to shortage of funds, work in the Amuri Subdivision was suspended. Limestone occurs in very large amount in the Te Kuiti district, and is extensively quarried for agricultural purposes. There is some coal, but the deposits are small, scattered, and in some cases difficult of access; they have, however, a decided local value, which is likely to increase. The Eketahuna Subdivision is part of the petroliferous province that extends along the east coast of the North Island. The northern half of this region is now mapped in detail, but the Eketahuna Subdivision is the first area in the southern half to be examined.

The soil-mapping in the Rotorua district, begun in 1930, proved of such value that the time of the two officers engaged on this work has this season been fully occupied in the reconnaissance mapping of different areas for the Native and Lands Departments. Considerable areas still remain to be mapped in this region, a work that will occupy most of next season. It is hoped, however, to devote some time to the examination of the soils of other districts.

The present trade depression and the considerable increase in the value of gold have revived public interest in the goldfields of the Dominion. The Geological Survey receives innumerable inquiries as to the distribution of gold in both Islands and has sold many maps of auriferous areas. Since the beginning of 1932 an officer has been detailed to examine different alluvial goldfields, and in the course of this work has visited old diggings in the Collingwood, Takaka, Wangapeka, and Howard districts in Nelson, and several once-famous fields in Otago. His investigations go to show that a number of men, considerable in the aggregate, could maintain themselves in modest comfort. In several localities in Otago the limiting factor is the scarcity of water. Next season it is hoped to extend these examinations to the West Coast, and also to examine more closely the quartz-drifts in Otago that cover large areas in that province and have yielded a great quantity of gold in the past.

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

Ten candidates sat at the annual Schools of Mines examinations held in November, 1931, for the six scholarships offered annually by the Department to students attending the various Schools of Mines within the Dominion, and, of these candidates, three (one each from the Runanga, Reefton, and Thames Schools) were successful in gaining scholarships, which are tenable for four years at the University of Otago.

The expenditure on Schools of Mines for the year ended 31st March, 1932, was £3,641, as compared with £3,672 for the previous year.