

HOUSING.

Fifty-four loans, including thirteen during the year under review, have been granted to miners and other workmen under the Department's housing scheme to enable them to erect and own their own houses. The loans, which range from £180 to £550, are repayable, together with interest, by fortnightly payments over a term of twenty years. I am pleased to state that a sum of £6,000 to enable further loans to be made is being provided on the current year's estimates of the State Coal-mines Account, together with a sum of £4,000 for the erection of four new staff cottages.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

During the 1938-39 field season the Geological Survey carried out systematic mapping and other investigation in the Amuri, Greymouth, and Glenorchy districts. Geophysical examinations were also made at Top Valley, Reefton, Kotuku, and Cromwell. In addition, officers made official visits to other parts of New Zealand, several of them being to Taranaki and Takaka, where iron-ore occurs in quantity.

The mapping of the Amuri Subdivision, begun several years ago and stopped because of more urgent work, was continued this year. The district contains large quantities of limestone and some low-grade phosphate.

The detailed survey of the Greymouth Coalfield, in which the most valuable coking and gas coals of the Dominion occur, was considerably hampered by persistent bad weather. Most of the seams now being worked in the Greymouth and Westport areas were systematically sampled. Estimates of the amounts of extractable coal were made, but it is clear that the quantity of available coal in the field can be accurately estimated only after extensive boring.

The mapping of the Glenorchy district, which contains quartz veins carrying gold and scheelite, was finished this season, a work made possible in this extremely rugged mountainous region only with the aid of aerial photography.

Geophysical studies were continued in the Reefton district, and the rock structures beside the productive Blackwater Lode were traced north beyond Big River. It is hoped that surface prospecting will later lay bare workable quartz veins in the wide belt of country between Waiuta and Merrijigs in which profitable lodes have so far not been found. Some geophysical work was also carried out in Top Valley, Marlborough, and at Bendigo, near Cromwell, Otago. In the former locality, what is believed to be part of the Jubilee Lode was located; some direct prospecting is required. Further seismic investigations near the oil-seepages at Kotuku tended to confirm the presence of a low dome in the unfavourably thin Tertiary beds of that region.

This year, in addition to several short papers, two areal bulletins, dealing respectively with the coal-mining area of Kaitangata and the gold-mining district of Naseby, have been printed.

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

Six scholarships are offered annually by the Department for competition by students attending the various Schools of Mines within the Dominion. Two candidates sat for the annual Scholarship Examinations held in November, 1938, and of these candidates, one from the Thames School was successful in gaining a scholarship, which is tenable for four years at the University of Otago.

The expenditure on Schools of Mines for the year ended 31st March, 1939, was £3,460, as compared with £3,910 for the previous year.

Students at the Otago University who are proceeding to the Diploma of Associate of the Otago School of Mines are required to obtain twelve months' practical experience in mining. For some years past considerable difficulty has been experienced by these students in obtaining employment at coal and metal mines during the summer vacation of the University, and it is therefore pleasing to record that during the 1938-39 vacation practically all the men who wanted work were satisfactorily placed.