

The deposit of oil-shale in the Nevis Valley was mapped in greater detail than was possible last year and estimates made of the amount of shale. The deposit is large and suitable for open-cut mining, but unfortunately it is of poor quality.

The mapping of the Grey coalfield is approaching completion, the chief area as yet unsurveyed in the great detail necessary for the work being that about Paparoa. The geologists engaged on this survey have now a good knowledge of the sequence and structure of the coal-measures, and the coal-mining industry is making increasing use of their services. From a third to a half of their time is taken up in reporting on faulting and thinning problems of the existing mines, in selecting sites for prospecting-bores, and in suggesting areas suitable for exploitation by working parties.

The geophysical examination of possible sites for dams for hydro-electrical-power development was continued on the Waikato River between Atiamuri and Cambridge. An officer, after testing the area in the vicinity of the copper deposit worked on Kawau Island nearly one hundred years ago, recommended prospecting.

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

The District Committees in which the control of the Schools of Mines is vested continue to take very active interest in their work. The increased interest displayed in the work of the schools augurs well for the future of the mining industry.

The value of the scholarships offered annually by the Department for competition among students attending Schools of Mines within the Dominion has been increased to £65 per annum in the case of students who have to reside away from home while attending the University of Otago, and to £45 in the case of students who are able to reside at home while attending the University.

At the annual examination held in November, 1941, nine scholarship candidates presented themselves for examination. Scholarships were awarded to two candidates from the Dunedin School and one from the Thames School. Two candidates from the Thames School were awarded partial passes.

The expenditure in the Schools of Mines for the year ended 31st March, 1942, was £3,390, as compared with £3,360 for the previous year.

MINERS' BENEFITS.

The provision for payment of a miner's benefit is contained in the Social Security Act, which has been operative since the 1st April, 1939.

One of the necessary conditions precedent to payment of the benefit is that the applicant should be seriously and permanently incapacitated by miners' phthisis or totally incapacitated by heart or other occupational disease associated with the mining service in New Zealand.

The rate of benefit for the miner is 30s. a week, and this may be increased by 10s. a week in respect of the wife. There is also provision for the payment of a grant of 10s. a week for each dependent child under the age of sixteen years, with a maximum grant in any particular case of £1 10s. weekly, but the benefit in respect of the children is reducible by all income of the family other than the miners' benefit in excess of £2 a week.

The widow of a miner who died while in receipt of a benefit may be granted a benefit of 17s. 6d. per week during widowhood.

This scheme, which originated in the Miners' Phthisis Act, 1915, is administered by the Social Security Commission, and the following summary of the operations for the year ended 31st March, 1942, has been supplied by the Social Security Department:—

Miners' Benefits.

	£
Payments from 1st November, 1915, to 31st March, 1941	1,260,140
Payments from 1941-42	83,280
	£1,343,420
Number of new grants for year 1941-42—	
Male	23
Female	8
	—
	31
Number of benefits in force, 31st March, 1942 (including two emergency)—	
Male	755
Female	133
	—
	888
Annual value of benefits in force at 31st March, 1942	£81,393
Average benefit per annum	£91 13s. 2d.
Dissection of benefits—	
Single miners	228
Married miners	527
Miners' widows	133
	—
	888

ASSISTANCE TO MINING.

During the financial year ended 31st March, 1942, assistance has been extended to the mining industry on a basis similar to past years. A sum of £25,238 was advanced to promote and maintain coal-production, £4,954 to scheelite-mining, and £7,760 to gold-mining. In addition, assistance to individual prospectors seeking gold and scheelite absorbed £9,775, and the Department itself expended £8,611 in prospecting and development work on strategic minerals.

This policy will be pursued during the coming year, except that no assistance will be available to new gold-mining ventures or for the working of alluvial gold deposits. The subsidized gold-mining scheme was terminated on the 30th June, 1942.

The activities of the Department and its policy of financial assistance will be devoted entirely to strategic minerals during the war period.