

Omitting the depression period, throughout the whole period, with the exception of a very small recession in 1941 and 1942, the number of persons employed in coal-mining has steadily increased. Their output has also increased, as shown in the following table :—

Table No. 87.—Table showing Total Output, in Tons, from 1932 to 1945

Year.	Output (Tons).	Year.	Output (Tons).
1932	1,842,022	1939	2,342,639
1933	1,821,258	1940	2,516,099
1934	2,060,315	1941	2,639,507
1935	2,115,184	1942	2,680,041
1936	2,140,217	1943	2,787,868
1937	2,277,799	1944	2,805,970
1938	2,222,088	1945	2,833,576

The increasing population, and particularly the increasing industrialization of the population, requires increasing quantities of coal to enable it to function effectively. This is particularly true in certain fields, especially transport, where the demands due to war and post-war conditions have been so heavy as to place a tremendous burden on coal-production to maintain transport and other operations. In other words, the shortage of coal is a feature of the increase in population and the increase in the industrialization and the mobility of that population.

A further factor of considerable importance relative to the shortage of coal is the inability in recent years to import coal from Australia. Prior to the war considerable quantities of first-grade coal were imported from Newcastle. The absence of this coal to-day has placed an added strain on New Zealand production.

Several witnesses suggested that, owing to the necessity for more coal in the Dominion, steps should be taken to encourage miners to emigrate to New Zealand. There is obviously scope for more miners to-day, but whether miners are available overseas is open to question. This subject will be discussed later in the report.

B. GOLD-MINING

The following table shows the number of persons engaged in the gold-mining industry from 1901 to 1936.

Table No. 88.—Table showing the Number of Males engaged in the Gold-mining Industry at various Censuses from 1901 to 1936

Year.	Number.	Year.	Number.
1901	12,533*	1921	2,288
1906	9,077*	1926	1,790
1911	6,969	1936	4,869
1916	4,269		

* NOTE.—Figures for 1901 and 1906 are from Factory Production Statistics, and subsequent years from census figures.

The wide fluctuations in these figures are indicative of the varying fortunes of the gold-mining industry. By the outbreak of the last war, when New Zealand was still on the gold standard and the more profitable dredging ventures had become unprofitable, quartz-mining was still continuing, but dredging had practically ceased. This tendency continued right through the "twenties." However, with the final abandonment of the gold standard early in the depression and the rise in the price of gold, there was an added stimulus to all forms of gold-mining. Dredging again became important. In some areas quartz-mining became more important, and in general there was an upward swing, which to some extent has continued to the present time, although its relative importance is not so great as it was in previous years.