COAL MINERS' RELIEF FUND

Section 4 of the Coal-mines Amendment Act, 1947, increased the levy by which the fund is financed from ½d. to 1d. per ton. This rise was made necessary by the imminent exhaustion of the fund, and during the current year it was also necessary for the State coal-mines to pay £1,000 in levies slightly in advance of the due date so that the current outgoings could be met.

Receipts for the year ended 31st March, 1948, were £5,749 13s. 6d., and expenditure for the year was £7,055 14s. 10d.

Interest earned amounted to £18 1s. 5d., and the balance standing to the credit of the fund on 31st March, 1948, was £553 19s. 8d.

At the end of last year the figures were: receipts, £6,212; expenditure, £8,299; interest, £78; balance as at 31st March, 1947, £1,841.

From now on the fund will receive the full benefit of the increased levy and the financial position can be expected to improve.

SOCIAL AMENITIES

During the financial year 1947–48 the sum of £3,081 was expended on providing social amenities for mining townships.

As in past years, the programme is handicapped by the general difficulties of the building industry. Wherever man-power and materials permit, the conditions in the mining communities will continue to be improved.

ASSISTANCE TO MINING

Subsidies and loans to the mining industry during the year ended 31st March, 1948, amounted to £6,113 8s. 7d. Details were:—

	£	s.	d.
Coal-mining	2,786	6	0
Scheelite-mining	516	7	6
Gold-mining	2,000	10	0
Sludge-channel maintenance	48	16	3
Recovery of pipe-lines	511	8	10
Copper prospecting	250	0	0
	£6,113	8	7

MINERS' BENEFITS

The provision for payment of a miner's benefit is contained in the Social Security Act, 1938, which came into operation on 1st April, 1939. One of the necessary qualifications is that the applicant should be seriously and permanently incapacitated by miners' phthisis or totally and permanently incapacitated by heart or other occupational disease associated with mining service in New Zealand.

The rate of benefit for a miner is £117 per annum, increased in the case of a married beneficiary by £117 per annum for the wife. The widow of a miner who died while in receipt of a miner's benefit may be granted a benefit of £91 per annum during widowhood.

These increased rates were effective from the coming into operation of the Social Security Amendment Act, 1947, on 1st October, 1947.