

auxiliary to the main hostels, are being provided at Ohai, Huntly, and Ohura, and hostels are projected for Granity, Denniston, Blackball and Renown. When the scheme is fully completed adequate accommodation with living-conditions of a high order will be available for single men at every important mining centre.

It is recognized that married men are more dependable than single men, and every effort is being made to provide additional houses for married men in mining districts. However, difficulties that are general to the whole building position of the country have not permitted as much progress in this direction as is desirable.

It has been disappointing that difficulties in securing equipment from overseas have made it impossible to carry out the experiments in mechanized mining on the full scale projected. At the Wilton State Coal-mine, where it was proposed to initiate this work, three coal-cutters—two of one type and one of another—and four electrically-driven drills have already been installed, and delivery is now awaited of three further coal-cutters. However, though portions of the scraper loader equipment have arrived, it has not been possible to complete the units and put them into commission.

There are, of course, obvious difficulties in introducing mechanized mining into old mines, whose original development plan made no allowance for the use of such equipment, and it is in the new mines that mechanization can be used to the greatest advantage.

Plans for the opening-up of new coal-mines by the State make provision for the installation of modern mechanical equipment suitable to the particular conditions of each area. It is worthy of mention that, as a result of the intensive survey and prospecting work carried out in the investigation of new fields, the conditions likely to be met in the development of new mines are known with reasonable accuracy and equipment can accordingly be ordered with confidence. Many mines in the past have been developed simply by following the coal from the outcrop, and, due to faulting and other complications for which there was little evidence, the result has been that access, haulage, and ventilation problems have become acute and mining operations inefficient. In new mines development work can be planned from the outset to meet the varying conditions that will be encountered, and the general efficiency of the mining operations should increase.

During the year drilling operations were completed at Morley in the Ohai Coal-field, at Rewanui in the Greymouth Field, and at the Plateau lease in the Denniston Coalfield, and active development at all three localities will commence as soon as men and equipment become available.

A limiting factor upon the production of coal in some fields in the past has been inadequate coal transport facilities. At Stockton preliminary work with the construction of the aerial ropeway has commenced and it is expected that the aerial will be in operation early in 1951. From then onwards increased production should be possible from this field.

A study of the coal transport problem in the Denniston Field has revealed that an improvement can be effected by the substitution of an aerial ropeway for the present endless-rope haulage system. As a first step in this programme a new stone haulage drive some 500 ft. long has been driven at the Steps entrance to the Whareatea Mine. The aerial ropeway that will serve this mine will also be used to transport coal from the mine to be developed on the Plateau area.

Continued attention is being given to the conservation of coal. Detailed plans have recently been prepared and are at present under consideration whereby sections of the Mangapehi State Coal-mine will be highly mechanized and the workings filled