

COAL-MINERS' RELIEF FUND

Section 4 of the Coal-mines Amendment Act, 1947, increased the levy by which the fund is financed from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1d. per ton, the rise being made necessary by the imminent exhaustion of the fund. Receipts for the year ended 31st March, 1949, were £11,373 3s. 9d. and expenditure for the year was £7,762 12s. 1d. Interest earned amounted to £56 1s. 10d. and the balance standing to the credit of the fund on 31st March, 1949, was £4,229 13s. 2d.

At the end of last year the figures were : receipts, £5,750 ; expenditure, £7,056 ; interest, £18 ; balance as at 31st March, 1949, £554. It will be noted that the financial position of the fund has considerably improved in response to the increased levy.

SOCIAL AMENITIES

During the financial year 1948-49 the sum of £5,575 was expended in providing social amenities for mining townships, as against £3,081 in the financial year 1947-48. Of this sum, £2,593 was supplied from the State Coal-mines Account and £2,982 from the " Mines " vote.

This expenditure covered a multitude of activities, the main ones being those of football clubs, cricket clubs, hall committees, bowling clubs, sports clubs, community centres, ambulance committees, playgrounds, fire brigades, tennis clubs, croquet clubs, swimming-baths, &c.

Shortage of both man-power and materials has handicapped the programme, but, as opportunity provides, conditions in the mining communities will be improved.

ASSISTANCE TO MINING

Subsidies and loans to the mining industry during the year ended 31st March, 1949, amounted to £4,873 15s. 1d. Details were :—

					£	s.	d.
Coal-mining	..	..	..	..	..	4,379	16 11
Scheelite-mining	..	..	..	..	..	224	0 0
Gold-mining	..	..	..	..	..	119	18 2
Erection bins, Cape Foulwind Limeworks	..	..	..	..	..	150	0 0
Total	..	..	..	..	..	£4,873	15 1

MINERS' BENEFITS

The provisions for payment of a miner's benefit are contained in the Social Security Act, 1938, which came into operation on the 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.