

The annual output of coal in this Dominion has doubled during the past decade. Prior to 1878 the total quantity of coal produced was only 709,931 tons.

The following statement shows the production, &c., of the principal collieries :—

Name of Colliery.	Locality.	Class of Coal.	Output for 1909.	Total Output to 31st December, 1909.	Total Number of Persons ordinarily employed.
<i>Northern District.</i>					
Hikurangi Coal Company (Limited)...	Hikurangi...	Semi-bituminous	Tons. 58,359	Tons. 639,952	84
Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited) ...	Huntly ...	Brown ...	192,827	2,093,280	460
Northern Collieries Company (Limited)	Hikurangi...	Semi-bituminous	39,301	323,547	73
<i>West Coast District.</i>					
Westport Coal Company (Limited) (Coalbrookdale Collieries)	Millerton ...	Bituminous	212,474	2,863,535	452
Westport-Stockton Coal Company (Limited)	Denniston	"	348,335	5,374,712	604
	Mangatini	"	89,675	92,942	200
New Zealand State Coal-mines	Seddonville	"	67,935	277,345	110
	Point Elizabeth	"	216,225	1,011,683	411
Blackball Coal Company (Limited) ...	Blackball...	"	120,065	1,146,620	190
<i>Southern District.</i>					
New Zealand Coal and Oil Company (Limited)	Kaitangata	Brown ...	127,732	2,440,412	327
Nightcaps Coal Company (Limited) ...	Nightcaps...	" ...	50,052	666,315	90
Other collieries, in all districts ...	...	Various ...	388,267	12,103,843	1,190
Totals ...	...	...	1,911,247	29,034,186	4,191

The predominant feature of the year in the coal-mining industry has been the increased demand for the best classes of coal : resulting in greater outputs from the principal collieries ; a decline, however, in the production of lignite from the southern mines has occurred, which may be attributed to the stoppage of many of the gold-dredges which usually burn that class of fuel.

SECTION II.—PERSONS EMPLOYED.

Inspection District.						Average Number of Persons employed during 1909.		
						Above Ground.	Below Ground.	Total.
Northern	...	...	...	...	...	155	627	782
West Coast	...	...	...	...	...	727	1,670	2,397
Southern	...	...	...	...	...	277	735	1,012
Totals, 1909	...	...	...	...	...	1,159	3,032	4,191
Totals, 1908	...	...	...	...	...	992	2,902	3,894

In conformity with the output the number of persons engaged at our collieries has practically doubled within the past decade.

SECTION III.—ACCIDENTS.

In 1909 seven fatal accidents occurred in and about the coal-mines of the Dominion, causing the loss of seven lives. The proportion of lives lost was 1.79 per thousand persons employed, which proportion, although lower than prevails in some countries, including North America and South Africa, exceeds the general European average.

By far the greatest number of accidents may be attributed to the carelessness of the sufferers or to misadventure.