

I. PRODUCTION OF MINERALS.

The following statement shows the value of the exports from metal-mines and kauri-gum fields from the 1st January, 1853, to the 31st December, 1912 :—

Classification.	1911.	1912.	Increase or Decrease.	Total from the 1st January, 1853, to the 31st December, 1912.
	£	£	£	£
Gold	1,816,782	1,345,131	471,651*	80,599,044
Silver	131,587	84,739	46,848*	1,834,848
Other minerals	22,200	20,571	1,629*	456,555
Kauri-gum	395,707	401,305	5,598†	16,210,457
Totals	2,366,276	1,851,746	514,530*	99,100,904

* Decrease. † Increase.

The considerable decline in the production of bullion from our gold-mines has been to a great extent due to the disastrous strikes, by which the majority of the most important quartz-mines in the Dominion, situated at Waihi, Blackwater, and Reefton, were rendered idle from 13th May to 2nd October. The shortage in the value of bullion during that period may be estimated at about £450,000. There has also been a decline in the value of the gold-production by dredges, amounting to £40,567; but this branch of mining is long past its zenith, and the annual decrease was anticipated. Small increases in the value of the production from the kauri-gum fields and scheelite-mines have occurred, together with a substantial increase in the coal-output.

II. PERSONS EMPLOYED.

The following statement shows the number of persons ordinarily employed in or about the metalliferous mines of the Dominion during the year :—

Classification.	Inspection District.			Total, 1912.
	Northern.	West Coast.	Southern.	
Gold and silver	2,681	1,097	1,384	5,162
Iron	...	9	...	9
Scheelite	...	...	68	68
Totals for 1912	2,681	1,106	1,452	5,239

III. ACCIDENTS.

It is satisfactory to report that the marked decline in the number of fatalities at metal-mines during the previous year was repeated in 1912. This gratifying result may be justly attributed to increased all-round vigilance, to a certain extent created by the investigations and report of the Mines Royal Commission of 1911.

Of the four fatal accidents which happened, and by which five lives were lost, during 1912, none could be charged to serious official neglect. The fatality at the May Queen Mine, Thames, by which two miners were asphyxiated by black-damp, was of a remarkable character, and there still remains some doubt as to the place of origin of the fatal gas. A brief description of this and other fatal accidents appears in this report.

The following is a summary of persons killed or seriously injured in metalliferous mines during 1912 :—

Inspection District.	Explosions.		Falls of Ground.		In Shafts.		Miscellaneous Under-ground.		Surface.		About Dredges.		Total.	
	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.
Northern	...	...	1	2	1	3	2	...	...	1	...	...	4	7
West Coast	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	2
Southern	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	1	4	1	3	2	...	...	1	1	...	5	9

Being at the rate of 0·95 fatalities per 1,000 persons employed.