1915.
NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT,

BY THE HON. W. D. S. MACDONALD, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

In presenting to the House my first annual Statement I think I can fairly congratulate the House and the country on the satisfactory position which the mining industry has maintained, notwithstanding the fact that for the half-year ended the 31st December last the nation has been engaged in the greatest war the world has ever known.

The war has had a greater effect on the mining industry than on most other industries. Not only have the miners of the Dominion found their full quota of men to go to the front and actively engage in upholding the Empire's cause, but the men who have been left behind to carry on the industry have been subject to special and peculiar disadvantages. Mining is an industry in which explosives of all kinds are largely used, and owing to the enormous demand for ammunition and other explosives for warlike purposes there has been, and still is, great difficulty in procuring a sufficient supply for the use of our miners. Then, again, our larger mining enterprises are greatly dependent on British and other imported capital for their prosecution and development; and since the outbreak of hostilities the inflow of capital to the Dominion has practically ceased. Moreover, the export of some minerals has been prohibited, and in the case of others has been greatly restricted owing to the closing of the usual markets or to the lessened demand. Notwithstanding these disadvantageous circumstances, however, the industry has held its own fairly well, and in some branches actually shows better results than during the preceding year.

The value of minerals exported, together with the coal-output for the year, amounted to £2,752,730, but as the exportation of gold was prohibited on the 5th August by the Banking Amendment Act, 1914, shortly after the outbreak of war, the value of minerals exported during the year does not even approximately represent the total production.

The value of the bullion produced from our gold-mines amounted to £1,502,649, of which £957,452 was exported, there having been a decrease in production as compared with the previous year amounting to about £60,716. Compared with 1912, however, it shows an increased output of £72,779.

The output of coal was the highest yet recorded, being 2,275,593 tons, an increase of 387,588 tons over the output of 1913.