

The gifts for Red Cross purposes, hospital requisites, and comforts for our troops in Egypt and other places represent not only the value of nearly £60,000, but also many thousands of hours of devoted labour, first in the collection of money, then in the purchase of material, and finally in the making-up of the material into various useful articles. Every credit is due to the various organizations, and especially to the women of the country for the magnificent work they have performed.

MINING.

The Imperial authorities requested that all supplies of scheelite and molybdenum be requisitioned for war purposes at a fixed price, and the Government is now purchasing all supplies available. The new arrangement has worked satisfactorily.

The output of coal for the year was 2,208,624 tons, as against 2,275,593 tons for the preceding year, a decrease of 66,969 tons. This decrease in the output is not surprising in view of the difficulties caused by the shortage of competent miners and also of steamers to carry the coal.

INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS.

No great difficulty has been experienced in dealing with the question of unemployment; on the contrary, the enlistment of large numbers of men has caused a considerable demand for other workers to take their places.

There has been one strike of note during the year—viz., that at the woollen-mill, Petone—arising out of a claim by the employees for 10 per cent. increase of wages. This dispute has since been settled, work has been resumed, and it is pleasing to note that no inconvenience regarding the supply of clothing for the Expeditionary Forces has been caused. With a few minor exceptions, the industrial conditions elsewhere are reported to have been satisfactory throughout the year.

Notwithstanding the number of enlistments and an increase in the cost of building-materials, there has been a continued demand for workers' dwellings, the number of which has increased from 471 on 31st March, 1915, to 553 on 31st March last, and there were in addition on the latter date thirty-seven dwellings in course of erection. Care has been exercised by the Government to proceed with the erection of dwellings only in those cases where the work could be carried out at a reasonable cost. It might be explained that all expenditure for workers' dwellings is recoverable in the rents and instalments collected from the occupants.

NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND.

A steady progress has been maintained, and the fund which, at the 31st December, 1914, stood at just under £54,000, had increased by the end of 1915 to considerably over £75,000. It may be noted that over one thousand members of the Fund have participated in the reduction of contributions granted by the Act to members serving in the Expeditionary Forces.

The first valuation of the Fund having been completed, the Actuary's report has been duly laid before Parliament. It is satisfactory to note that the Fund is shown to be sound, and that no further subsidy is required beyond that which was provided for in the original Act.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

The grant to friendly societies of half the cost of reinsuring the funeral benefits of their members on active service has greatly assisted them in meeting the strain caused by the war mortality. Up to the end of 1915 a sum of £3,700 was paid to the societies under this heading.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS.

The results from this branch of the Government Service during the past year have been exceedingly satisfactory. The direct revenue from the resorts under the control of the Department, in spite of the war, shows a return of £31,048, compared with £26,630 for the previous year.