

The following table shows the number of miners in each inspection district, and the branch of mining in which they are engaged :—

Classification.	Inspection District.			Totals.		
	Northern.	West Coast.	Southern.	1916.	1915.	Decrease.
Gold, silver, and tungsten ore	1,693	1,144	866	3,703	4,193	490
Coal	838	2,221	929	3,988	4,156	168
Other minerals	5	..	5	10	12	2
Totals	2,536	3,365	1,800	7,701	8,361	660

MINING ACCIDENTS.

The number of lives lost at metalliferous mines during 1916 was nine, the proportion of deaths per 1,000 persons employed being 2·42.

At collieries six lives were lost, being at the rate of 1·5 per 1,000 persons employed, or an output of 376,189 tons per life lost.

At the North Island collieries no fatal accident happened during the year, and at the collieries of Canterbury, Otago, and Southland none has occurred during the past three years and a half—a remarkable record.

At those operations which are regulated by the Stone-quarries Act, 1910, two lives were accidentally lost, being at the rate of 1·24 per 1,000 persons ordinarily employed.

At Government quarries, which do not come under the operations of the Act, and are therefore not inspected by officers of the Mines Department, seven lives were accidentally lost during the year, and four during 1915. It appears to be desirable that Government quarries should be brought under the operations of the Stone-quarries Act. No difficulties have hitherto arisen through Government machinery being under the provisions of the Inspection of Machinery Act and State collieries being under the provisions of the Coal-mines Act.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Owing to reductions in the regular staff, caused by war conditions and by resignations, detailed field-work was done only in Taranaki. Officers of the Survey, however, visited a large number of localities in order to furnish reports on coal, limestone, phosphate-deposits, &c. The publications during the year ended the 31st May included only the Annual Report and Bulletin No. 18, which deals with the geology and mineral resources of the Reefton district. Three elaborate palæontological reports are about to be issued, and several bulletins dealing with areal geology are in various stages of preparation and publication. Data for a fairly complete report on the limestone and phosphate deposits of the Dominion have been obtained, and are being assembled for publication as rapidly as the small staff and other work on hand will permit.

STATE COLLIERIES.

The output from State collieries during 1916 was 277,845 tons, of which 140,917 tons was produced from the Point Elizabeth Colliery, and 136,928 tons from the Liverpool Colliery. The output from the two collieries exceeded that of the previous year by 39,645 tons. The State coal business during the year ended the 31st March last resulted in a profit of £18,521 5s. 9d., as compared with a profit of £2,515 during the previous year. The average price realized for State coal during the twelve months was 19s. 4·76d. per ton, as compared with 16s. 8·71d. per ton for the preceding year.

The Point Elizabeth Colliery will probably be worked out within the next twelve months, and thereafter considerable difficulty will be experienced in supplying coal to meet the demand, especially for railway and household requirements. Investigations have been made during the past eighteen months with a view to discovering a locality where a new State mine could be successfully established. The reports obtained were not sufficiently encouraging to enable any decided opinion as to the advisability of embarking on a new colliery to be formed.