

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, 1916 :—

Classification.	1915.	1916.	Increase or Decrease.	Total from the 1st January, 1853, to the 31st December, 1916.
	£	£	£	£
Gold	1,694,553	1,199,212	Dec. 495,341	85,847,675
Silver	95,583	85,111	Dec. 10,472	2,181,493
Tungsten-ore	27,784	49,070	Inc. 21,286	201,550
Other minerals	5,377	14,614	Inc. 9,277	412,642
Kauri-gum... ..	279,133	339,343	Inc. 60,210	17,875,483
Totals	2,102,430	1,687,350	Dec 415,080	106,518,843

The advance in the production of tungsten-ore is due to the increased price created by munition requirements. The decrease in the value of bullion from gold-mines is not unexpected, quartz-mining and gold-dredging being declining industries.

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, 1916.
	Northern.	West Coast.	Southern.	
Gold, silver, and tungsten	1,693	1,144	866	3,703
Cinnabar	5	...	...	5
Tin	...	...	3	3
Copper	...	...	2	2
Totals for 1916	1,698	1,144	871	3,713
Totals for 1915	1,876	1,356	971	4,205

The decrease in the number of persons employed may, to a considerable extent, be attributed to enlistment for military service, and to the decline of gold-mining.

III. ACCIDENTS.

The following is a summary of persons killed or seriously injured in metalliferous mines during 1916 :—

Inspection District.	Explosives.		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	1	2	2	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	4	4
West Coast	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	1	1	...	1	...	4	2
Southern	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	1	1
Totals	...	2	2	2	3	1	...	1	3	...	1	1	9	7

Being at the rate of 2.42 fatalities per 1,000 persons employed.

During the first half of 1916 no fatal accident occurred at any metal-mine; then followed nine before the close of the year. Of these only two may be classed as accidents inseparable from the dangerous occupation of mining—viz., those by which T. F. Rowney at Waihi and perhaps T. J. O'Connor at Reefton lost their lives—and I regret to report that the accidents to W. Irvine, A. Riley, J. Shore, M. Hillhouse, E. Parker, and G. Edgar were due to either the recklessness or ignorance of the sufferers, and that the death of J. McIntosh was due to a criminally mischievous act, for which the culprit escaped justice. Full details of these fatal accidents are here furnished. The most capable management and inspection in the world is helpless against some of the careless acts I describe.