

owing to a large number of men who had taken up mining temporarily during the war period taking up occupations in other directions. However, despite these adverse conditions, railway stocks were again built up until, at the end of March, they stood at 28,000 tons; but following the Easter holidays, when additional trains were again provided to cope with the services, stocks were reduced until at the end of April they were down to 21,000 tons, since when they have been steadily going down, reaching the 10,000 mark when the present cut was put into operation. During May and June several stoppages took place in the West Coast lignite and Waikato mines, which seriously restricted not only supplies available for railway requirements, but for other essential industries.

There appears to be an impression abroad that the whole output of coal from the West Coast mines could be drawn on for railway purposes. This idea is quite erroneous, as the railways require screened coal for their main services.

The following figures show the quantities of coal, including lignites, delivered to the railways for the six years ended 31st March, 1919 :—

	Tons.
1913-14	293,157
1914-15	306,656
1915-16	324,343
1916-17	330,660
1917-18	271,110
1918-19	307,369

The deliveries for the seven months of the current year are as under :—

	Tons.
January	10,959
February	31,105
March	36,762
April	15,026
May	19,198
June	13,950
July	19,665

146,665

Average per month, 20,952 tons.

CENSUS OF COAL STOCKS HELD AS RETURNED QUARTERLY BY GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN SINCE 30TH APRIL, 1917.

	Tons.
As at 30th April, 1917	183,286
As at 31st July, 1917	218,907
As at 31st October, 1917	191,249
As at 31st January, 1918	178,192
As at 30th April, 1918	151,866
As at 31st July, 1918	178,301
As at 31st October, 1918	186,043
As at 31st January, 1919	111,319
As at 30th April, 1919	121,049

The serious position, together with the unfavourable outlook of coal-supplies at the beginning of the present winter, demonstrated the necessity for closer control over the distribution of coal from the time shipped until reaching the consumer. It was therefore arranged to obtain statistical information as to the monthly outputs of all Dominion mines, and detailed information from the various Coal Trade Committees showing the actual direction in which the coal is distributed. In this connection the following table shows the movement of coal shipped from the West Coast for the month of July to the various primary industries and services:—

Summary showing Approximate Allocation of Coal actually shipped from Greymouth and Westport for the Month of July, 1919.

	Tons.
Railways	6,987
Gas	12,638
Freezing	5,280
Light and power	2,901
Bunkering	17,744
General industries	11,110
Domestic	7,207
Total tons	63,867

Summary showing Class of Coal shipped from West Coast Mines for July, 1919.

	Tons.
Screened coal	9,505
Unscreened	39,706
Steam and small	14,656
Total tons shipped	63,867