more easily to pilfering. The loss in general is due to spilling and pilfering *en route*, evaporation, wind and other weather disturbances while screening. It must be remembered that every handling tends to make dross. The regulation of the Railway Department insisting on at least 6 tons full weight being placed in every truck is responsible for some of the loss, as it is impossible for some trucks to hold 6 tons without great risk of spilling. (This is particularly the case in the South Island with brown coal and lignites.)

Siding Rents: These have increased considerably for the period, those of one firm 400 per cent. in seven years, of another over 200 per cent. in four years. An additional shunting-charge of 2d. per ton has also been imposed during the period.

Cartage: This is difficult to assess precisely, because no one carter is engaged exclusively in delivering household coal. The majority of the estimates set down an average of 6s.; but one firm, having analysed its actual cost as nearly as it could for a period of six months, involving from fifteen to twenty men engaged mainly upon the delivery of coal, found its costs to be 7s. 6d. per ton (including profit). The secretary of the Drivers' Union thinks that 7s. 9d. per ton is a reasonable price for the delivery of coal; 6s. is reasonable for general carrying, in his opinion; but "a man who is not continually delivering coal is somewhat at a disadvantage. First of all, he has to go to the merchant to get coal, which is supplied to him in sacks; he has to deliver the coal; there are some very awkward places that will necessitate often the driver putting in thirty minutes in putting coal where it is needed. That driver has often to return the sacks to the coal-merchant, otherwise he is charged 10d. per sack." This sum (7s. 9d.), of course, includes depreciation and profit, as well as provision for the maintenance of the horse, cart, and man. But the majority of the dealers in coal are satisfied if they receive the current rate of wages, and make very small profit, if any, on the coal-delivery.

Cartage per ton delivered increases rapidly as the size of the average order diminishes. It costs much more to deliver a given quantity of coal in bag or ¼-ton lots than in ton lots. Undoubtedly the shortage of coal during the last four years and the consequent necessity of coal-dealers rationing out their diminishing supplies to consumers has helped to raise the retail price by lowering the average amount delivered per man, and therefore raising the cost of delivery.

(*d.*) *Newcastle Coal.* Only a very small amount of Australian coal is used in Auckland for household purposes. The cost of Australian coal at the ship's slings was as follows:—

TABLE 41.—COST EX SHIP OF NEWCASTLE COAL AT AUCKLAND.

	1916–17. s. d.	1918. s. d.	Percentage Increase.
F.o.b. Newcastle	11 3	15 0	33⅓
Freight	11 3	16 3	44½
Wharfage	1 3	1 3	..
Harbour-improvement rate (since September, 1917)	..	0 6	..
Total ex ship	23 9	33 0	39

A large proportion of the coal is taken by the Railway at £1 13s. 9d. Coal taken for Government purposes pays no wharfage or harbour rate, and out of the 2s. 6d. profit the wholesale importer has to pay his costs insurance, exchange, loss in weight, and overhead charges.

The following is a dealer's estimate (September, 1918) of the distributing-costs of Australian coal in Auckland:

TABLE 42.

	£	s.	d.
Cost ex ship	1	13	0
Cartage to yard and trimming	0	3	0
Rent	0	0	9
Bagging and loading	0	2	9
Loss in weight	0	2	6
Loss on sacks	0	2	0
Delivery	0	7	0
Expenses	0	2	9
Bad debts	0	0	3
	2	14	0

Since there has been a great falling-off in the importation of Australian coals during the war period, the proportion of the total available supply in New Zealand taken by the Government railways has increased considerably.

Newcastle coal is harder on sacks than lignite. The loss of weight between Newcastle and Auckland amounts to as much as 5 per cent.—for example, 47 tons out of a cargo of 1,000 tons.

(*e.*) *Public Apathy.* Though the increase in the price of coal has been felt acutely by the smaller consumers, particularly those taking bag lots, it appears that the majority of the customers of some dealers do not complain of the higher price, regarding this as an inevitable accompaniment of war conditions, or as the necessary result of a well-deserved increase in the pay of miners and all others engaged in an industry the conditions of which they believe to be most unpleasant. Consumers do not appear to be sufficiently alive to their own interests to take advantage of opportunities of obtaining coal at a lower price, or of preventing a rise in price, or of developing the best and most