

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF OUTPUTS AND IMPORTATIONS FOR THE SEVEN MONTHS OF THE CURRENT YEAR ENDED 31ST JULY, 1921, IN COMPARISON WITH THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD OF 1920.

	Monthly Outputs, Im- portant Mines.		Importations.		Combined Outputs and Importations.		Increase.
	1920.	1921.	1920.	1921.	1920.	1921.	
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
January ..	111,132	105,911	48,475	69,116	159,607	175,027	15,420
February ..	114,921	127,324	44,466	103,532	159,387	230,856	71,469
March ..	144,305	136,639	45,646	86,561	189,951	223,200	33,249
April ..	128,787	153,544	36,078	77,596	164,865	231,140	66,275
May ..	144,040	145,310	38,768	72,024	182,808	217,334	34,526
June ..	152,366	144,205	35,854	81,454	188,220	225,659	37,439
July ..	152,642	140,141	57,644	71,564	210,286	211,705	1,419
Totals ..	948,193	953,074	306,931	561,847	1,255,124	1,514,921	259,797

The business of the Firewood Depot continues to expand, the general public appreciating the facilities provided for obtaining supplies of the best firewood at reasonable cost. During the financial year 2,830 cords of firewood were disposed of, and the depot at the 31st March last held a stock of 2,416 cords of first-grade firewood. Sales during the past few months have been somewhat slow owing to the exceptionally mild winter, but a change to colder conditions should bring about an improvement in this respect. The depot is now capable of dealing with an outturn of from 30 to 40 cords daily. Labour-saving devices have been installed wherever possible in order to minimize handling and to reduce working-expenses to the lowest possible point. During the year a slight increase was made in the selling-rates of all grades of wood to cover the advance in price demanded by wood-suppliers in the country districts, and to provide for increases in railway freights, cartage, and labour employed in the yard. Notwithstanding the increase referred to, prices are lower than those charged by competing firms for similar classes of wood. Inquiries made in country towns adjacent to the sources of supply indicate that the rates charged to householders there are considerably in excess of the present selling-rates from the Government depot. There is no doubt that the establishment of the Firewood Depot during a period of acute shortage of coal for domestic use has been of great benefit to the householders of Wellington and suburbs, and has minimized the inconvenience and hardship they would otherwise have suffered. In consequence of the termination of the activities of the Coal-control Department the Mines Department will in future be charged with the administration of the Firewood Depot as from the 1st September.

Before concluding this report I wish to again record my appreciation of the services rendered by the Coal-trade Committees in the four centres, together with the honorary representatives of same in other districts, for the exceptionally good work they have accomplished in the public interest during the period coal-control has been in operation, and to assure them that the gratuitous services they have rendered are fully appreciated by Government and all consumers of coal throughout the Dominion.

The assistance rendered by the Post and Telegraph, Railway Department, and the Harbour Board in connection with the establishment and working of the Firewood Depot is acknowledged; likewise the assistance of the Customs and Marine Departments, and the Government Statistician's Office in regard to various phases of the Coal-control Department's work. The Collectors of Customs at the different ports have rendered valuable assistance in supplying statistical information relative to coal matters and the movements of steamers carrying coal. I have also to compliment the staffs of the Coal-control Department and the Firewood Depot on the efficient manner in which they have always carried out their duties, and to assure them that their loyal service under sometimes most difficult and trying circumstances has been appreciated.

D. H. GUTHRIE, Acting Minister in Charge.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (525 copies), £6.

By Authority: MARCUS F. MARKS, Government Printer, Wellington.—1921.

Price 3d.]