

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

During the past year geological surveys have been conducted in the Dargaville, Waiapu, and Ohura districts. The total area surveyed in detail amounted to about 1,520 square miles. Mining is being carried on in none of these districts, but all probably contain mineral resources that will be utilized in the future. The year's work has been in the nature of a "stocktaking," so that some idea of the value of the mineral resources of New Zealand may be formed. In the Dargaville district the limestone and coal deposits have been examined; in the Ohura district the extent of the thick coal of the Waitewhena coalfield has been determined as closely as possible; and in the Waiapu district the structure of the large areas over which indications of petroleum occur has been studied.

Owing to the financial stringency the only publications issued by the Geological Survey during the year were its annual report and Bulletin No. 23, in which the mineral resources of western Southland were described. In addition to the ordinary bulletins prepared by the members of the staff, these include memoirs on the fossils of New Zealand written by specialists in other countries. The base on which geology is founded is widened by the unpaid labours of these scientists, and on the correct interpretation of the geology of New Zealand depends the efficient utilization of its resources both agricultural and mineral.

STATE AID TO MINING.

Considerable use continues to be made of the Government prospecting drills. During the year five parties employed these drills, an aggregate of 4,676 ft. being drilled in search of coal, cinnabar, and alluvial gold. Workable coal-seams were proved at Glentunnel and Bush Gully, Canterbury, and a payable alluvial gold deposit at Tucker Flat, Kanieri. During the year ended 31st March, 1922, twenty-nine approved prospecting-parties were granted subsidies amounting to £1,980, of which £502 was expended during the year, in addition to £3,261 authorized during previous years. Upon these operations sixty-five persons were intermittently employed. The results attained by five parties were satisfactory.

The expenditure on roads and tracks by subsidies and direct grants out of the Public Works Fund vote, "Roads on Goldfields," during the year amounted to £11,329, as against £11,050 during the previous year.

The expenditure by the Mines Department on schools of mines for the year amounted to £5,848.

The Waimea-Kumara and Mount Ida Government Water-races, which in past years considerably aided alluvial-gold mining in the Kumara and Naseby districts, have during the year ended 31st March, 1922, supplied claims employing twenty-eight miners with water for sluicing, by which gold to the approximate value of £5,633 was obtained. The cash received for water sold amounted to £1,492 7s. 3d., the expenditure on the upkeep of the races being £3,806. During the current year considerable economies in connection with the upkeep of these races have been effected, as the result of which it is hoped that the receipts for the sales of water will meet the expenditure incurred by the Government.

MINER'S PHTHISIS ACT, 1915.

The benefits under this Act were extended by the Finance Acts, 1919 and 1920.

In order to qualify an applicant must be totally incapacitated for work owing to miner's phthisis (pneumoconiosis) contracted while working as a miner in the mines of New Zealand.

The pension for a married man or widower with children under the age of fourteen years is £1 15s. a week, for a single man £1 5s. a week, and for the widow of a miner entitled to a pension and who dies of miner's phthisis 17s. 6d. a week during widowhood. It is further provided that a miner in receipt of a pension may be absent from New Zealand for a period not exceeding two years and still be entitled to a pension.