Fund, the Relief Fund shows a diminution of £203 14s. 1d. as at the 31st March, 1927, as against a diminution of £1,306 9s. 9d. as at the 31st March, 1926, notwithstanding the fact that since the whole of the liquid assets of the Sick and Accident Funds were handed over to the Public Trustee a higher rate of interest was earned.

The amounts pooled at the 1st April, 1926, were—Sick and Accident Funds, £14,603 4s. 1d.; Coal-miners' Relief Fund, £12,469 1s. 3d.: a total of £27,072 5s. 4d. The interest earned for the twelve months ended 31st March, 1927, was £1,140 19s. 3d., while for the same period the income from the ½d.-per-ton contribution and the total expenditure amounted respectively to £4,213 14s. 11d. and £5,584 12s. 10d. In addition, the sum of £26 4s. 7d. was recredited to the fund on account of allowances overpaid and vouchers recredited, &c.

STATE COLLIERIES.

Housing.

With the object of enabling reputable miners and other employees working at the State colleries to erect and own their own homes a housing scheme was introduced by the Government several years ago, but it was not until quite recently that the employees availed themselves of the opportunity thus offered.

Fifteen loans for financing the cost of the erection of fifteen houses have been sanctioned during the past twelve months, the lowest advance being for £250 and the highest £300. Repayments are made at the rate of 3s. 4d. per week for each £100 loaned, and at the end of twenty years' time the loan is liquidated.

Output and Sales.

The operations of the State coal-mines and State coal-depots for the year ended 31st March, 1927, are briefly reviewed hereunder.

Liverpool Colliery.—The gross output for the year was 151,180 tons, as compared with 107,277 tons for last year, an increase of 43,903 tons.

James Colliery.—The gross output for the year was 34,505 tons, as compared with 26,781 tons for last year, an increase of 7,724 tons.

A comparative statement for the two years is shown hereunder:—

Mine.	Output in Tons, 1926–27.		Output in Tons, 1925–26.	
	Gross.	Net.	Gross.	Net.
Liverpool	151,180	144,970	107,277	102,400
James	34,505	30,147	26,781	24,735

Note.—The difference between the gross and the net output is the allowance for mine-consumption and waste. In addition to the above 1,560 tons of coal were purchased for resale, of which 190 tons were purchased from co-operative parties on the West Coast.

The disposal, inclusive of stock on hand at the beginning of the year, was as follows: Supplied to—Depots, 46,083 tons; railways, 23,542 tons; other Government Departments, 6,246 tons; shipping, 25,867 tons; gasworks, 61,173 tons; other consumers, 11,843 tons: total, 174,754 tons.

The total sales of State coal from the Liverpool Mine for the year amounted to 144,581 tons, value £197,175, as compared with 102,953 tons, value £149,978, for last year—an increase of 41,628 tons, with an increase in value of £47,197.

The average price realized by the mine on the total sales for the year was £1 7s. 3·3d., a decrease of 1s. 10·32d. on last year's average.

The total sales of State coal from the James Mine for the year amounted to 30,173 tons, value £43,457, giving an average of £1 8s. 9·66d. per ton, a decrease of 1s. 6·69d. on last year's average.

The sales of coal, &c., through the medium of the depots totalled 115,881 tons, value £228,347, as against 98,326 tons, value £198,745, for last year.

The profits at the mines were £20,054, and at the depots, &c., £2,615, making a net profit of £22,669. £4,552 was applied to the Sinking Fund Account. From a financial point of view the year's business may be regarded as very satisfactory, due in a large measure to the collieries losing very little time on account of strikes.