

from their work by means of buses, and the Department has for some years been subsidizing the cost incurred in that respect. For the year ended 31st March last the subsidy amounted to £359, which is about 2d. per ton on all coal produced from that mine and sold during that year.

It is a practice on the part of all collieries to supply the employees with coal at reduced rates. The amount charged by the Department is at the rate of 3s. per ton at the bins, the men paying in addition thereto the cost of haulage and cartage. For the year ended the 31st March, 1931, the loss incurred by the Department in respect of these sales was about 14s. 6d. per ton. In addition, the Department has been for some years subsidizing the salary of the doctor employed by the miners at the rate of £200 a year. Grants have also been made for bowling-greens, tennis-courts, croquet-lawns, and maintaining the streets in the borough. Loans have been granted to thirty-four miners to enable them to erect dwellings to accommodate the men, their wives, and families.

Notwithstanding the fact that the mines are being operated as State coal-mines and for the benefit of the public, and that special benefits are enjoyed by the miners, it is appalling to find the men stopping periodically without any real reason. Some of the stoppages have caused certain large consumers of State coal to purchase their supplies from overseas. The system under which the State mines are being worked is not satisfactory, and if stoppages recur the Government will be compelled to consider other methods by which the mines can be operated. The interests of the public might be better served if the whole of the State coal-mines could be worked in suitable sections on a co-operative basis. Consumers of State coal would thus have their requirements supplied, and at lower prices than those ruling to-day.

HOUSING.

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

To the 31st March, 1931, thirty-five loans for financing the cost of the erection of houses have been sanctioned, the lowest advance being for £250 and the highest £300. Repayments are made at the rate of 3s. 3½d. 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, 1931, are briefly reviewed hereunder.

Liverpool Colliery.—The gross output for the year was 131,103 tons, as compared with 141,420 tons for last year, a reduction of 10,317 tons.

James Colliery.—The gross output for the year was 42,391 tons, as compared with 43,965 tons for last year, a reduction of 1,574 tons.

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

Mine.	Output, in Tons, 1930-31.		Output, in Tons, 1929-30.	
	Gross.	Net.	Gross.	Net.
Liverpool	131,103	125,430	141,420	134,740
James	42,391	41,081	43,965	42,950

NOTE.—The difference between the gross and the net output is the allowance for mine consumption and waste. In addition to the above, 6,577 tons of coal were purchased for resale, of which 4,542 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, 61,849 tons ; railways, 14,604 tons ; other Government Departments, 4,927 tons ; shipping, 9,244 tons ; gasworks, 65,286 tons ; other consumers, 9,575 tons : total, 165,485 tons.