

GOLDFIELDS REVENUE AND GOLD DUTY.

The amount of goldfields revenue received and payable to local bodies during the year ended 31st March, 1932, was £12,010 11s. 7d., and the amount received and payable to Native and European owners and special endowments was £194 14s. 3d.

During the same period the sum of £11,015 0s. 5d. was received by way of duty on gold exported, of which £2,831 10s. 5d. was credited to the Consolidated Fund to assist in the payment of miners' pensions, and the balance of £8,183 10s. was credited to the Local Bodies' Deposit Account for the benefit of the local bodies in whose districts the gold was won, so that during the year the total sum of £20,194 1s. 7d. was received on behalf of the local bodies from these sources.

MINING PRIVILEGES.

That increased interest is being maintained in the mining industry is shown by the fact that during the year ended 31st March, 1932, 1,276 licenses for mining privileges were granted under the provisions of the Mining Act, 1926, as compared with 544 for the previous year. Out of this number two hundred and eighty-one were licenses for claims authorizing the holders to mine for gold. For the same period 141 mining privileges, including fifteen licenses for claims, were struck off the registers under the provisions of section 188 of the said Act.

In view of the fact that greater interest is now being taken in gold-mining, and as there are, no doubt, many men prospecting who are not familiar with the procedure to be followed to obtain mining privileges, it is pointed out that the necessary forms of application for mining privileges are obtainable from all Wardens' Courts. These forms may be completed by the applicant himself and forwarded by post to the nearest Warden's Court, it being unnecessary for him to appear personally in support of his application unless requested by the Warden to do so. Where an applicant does not desire to attend the Court in support of his application, he should advise the Mining Registrar at the Warden's Court to this effect and request him to supply the necessary declaration form, which should be completed by the applicant and forwarded with his application. A mining privilege can thus be obtained in most cases at the amount of the fees prescribed by the regulations under the Mining Act, 1926.

PROSPECTING FOR OIL.

During the year seven companies were engaged in boring for oil in several parts of the Dominion, the aggregate footage bored being 11,228 ft. A total production of 111,568 gallons of oil was obtained from two wells at New Plymouth, of which quantity Moturoa No. 2 well produced 71,568 gallons of crude oil and Blenheim No. 2 well 40,000 gallons. The total production of crude petroleum oil to the 31st December, 1931, is estimated at 1,669,728 gallons.

COAL-MINING.

During the year 1931 2,157,756 tons of coal were produced from the mines operating in the Dominion, or a decrease of 384,336 tons when compared with the previous year's figures.

The cause of the decreased production may be attributed to lower consumption by railways, gasworks, steamers, and by the general public; also to the increased competition in consequence of the use of fuel oil and electricity for power, heating, and lighting purposes.

Recognizing that there are too many mines in operation, the Government has recently decided not to grant any more coal leases, but consideration will be given to any applications in respect of an area or areas which are isolated and which need coal to supply only local requirements.