

STATE AID TO MINING.

As in previous years, considerable use was made of the Government prospecting drills. They were hired by six parties, and a total of 5,645 ft. was drilled.

The sum of £7,000 was voted for expenditure by way of subsidies for prospecting. The balance of unexpended authorities at the 31st March, 1931, and those issued during the year, less cancellations, amounted to £8,073 14s. 10d. Of this amount the sum of £4,811 2s. 11d. was expended by way of actual subsidies during the year, leaving a balance of £3,262 11s. 11d. authorized but not spent at the 31st March, 1932. In addition, the sum of £116 17s. 10d. was expended by the Department in connection with the Unemployment Board's prospecting schemes. The number of men given employment through the subsidies granted by the Mines Department was 278.

In addition, between 500 and 600 men were assisted up to the 31st March, 1932, under the Unemployment Board's prospecting schemes, at an approximate cost of £6,000.

Provision totalling £4,888, including £4,498 in the Public Works Fund, was made for expenditure by way of direct grants and subsidies for roads and tracks.

The balance of the unexpended authorities at the 31st March, 1931, and those issued during the year amounted to £3,176 16s. 1d. Of this amount the sum of £2,871 16s. was expended.

As usual, all applications for assistance in this direction were carefully investigated, and, having regard to the necessity for curtailing expenditure as far as possible, assistance was granted in those cases where the results of the investigations warranted it.

The expenditure on Schools of Mines amounted to £3,641.

LATE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF COAL-MINES.

It is with extreme regret that I have to record the passing-away of Mr. John Archibald Campbell Bayne on the 1st January, 1932, during an official visit to the Auckland District.

The deceased held the position of Inspecting Engineer of Mines and Chief Inspector of Coal-mines as from the 30th January, 1923, and during the whole of his official career in the Mines Department he carried out his work with conspicuous ability, and largely as the result of his efforts better mining methods in many of the coal-mines in the Dominion were brought about, which will result in a greater extraction of coal, with added safety to those engaged in the industry, and with, it is believed, consequential financial benefits to all concerned.