

HOUSING.

Thirty-five loans have been granted to miners and others, under the Department's housing scheme, to enable the workmen to erect and own their own houses. The loans, which range from £250 to £300, are repayable, together with interest, by fortnightly instalments over a term of twenty years. No new loans were granted during the year under review.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

During the 1935-36 field season detailed geological examinations were carried out in the Dannevirke, Waikaka, and Reefton districts. The work in the Dannevirke area continues that in the Eketahuna Subdivision adjoining on the south, and was undertaken to enable an idea to be formed of the petroleum possibilities of the region. Unfortunately, in spite of many oil indications, the chances of obtaining oil in commercial amount in the southern Hawke's Bay and eastern Wellington districts seem to be poor.

The recent gravels of the Waikaka-Wakaia district yielded a rich harvest to miners of past generations, and older gold-bearing gravels involved along faults or depressed by earth-movements below the present drainage channels are still being worked. The geological investigations in this district are being continued in order that the structure may be better understood and the miner thereby assisted.

The auriferous quartz veins of the Reefton district were geologically mapped and reported on many years ago. Much more detailed examination of part of the lode-bearing belt carried out this year clearly shows that intensive geological studies will help to restrict prospecting to smaller areas than had been found possible in the past. The method will be especially applicable where the rocks are in great part covered with gravels and other surface deposits. In such areas geophysical investigations may be used to locate hidden lodes, of which the size and value may then be ascertained by the usual methods of prospecting.

This year the Palæontologist completed a valuable report on the molluscan faunas of the little-known lower part of the younger rock formations of New Zealand. It is hoped to publish this in the coming year. With assistance from the Labour Department (Employment Division) an outside expert was employed to examine many samples of rock for foraminifera. These minute organisms are widespread in our Tertiary formations, and their study, if adequately continued, will undoubtedly aid in the working-out of the structure and sequence of the vast thicknesses of otherwise nearly barren sandstones and mudstones that cover such large areas in the petroliferous districts of New Zealand.

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

Five candidates sat at the annual Schools of Mines Examinations held in November, 1935, for the six scholarships offered annually by the Department to students attending the various Schools of Mines within the Dominion, and, of these candidates, four (two from the Thames School and one from each of the Reefton and Otago Schools) were successful in gaining scholarships, which are tenable for four years at the University of Otago.

The expenditure on Schools of Mines for the year ended 31st March, 1936, was £3,536, as compared with £3,470 for the previous year.

The work of the various Schools of Mines will have my most sympathetic support.

MINERS' PENSIONS.

The Pensions Act, 1926, as amended, provides for payment of pensions to miners seriously and permanently incapacitated by miner's phthisis contracted while mining in New Zealand. The rate of pension for a miner is £1 5s. a week, with 10s. a week added for his wife, if he is married, and a maximum of 10s. a week for each dependent child under fifteen, subject to a limit of £4 5s. a week for the family.

The widow of a miner who dies of miner's phthisis while entitled to pension may be granted 17s. 6d. a week for the period of two years immediately following the husband's death.