

Tests of detaching-hooks by actual overwinds are not required as frequently as they were, but all detaching-hooks in use must be completely dissembled and examined at intervals not exceeding three months.

Except at mines specially exempted by the Minister, the use underground of forks, riddles, harps, or other arrangements for sizing and screening coal is prohibited.

A copy of every report made by an official underground must now be sent to the surface immediately.

All workmen's Inspectors must now hold certificates stating they are able to test for inflammable gas.

The workmen employed in the mines have a right to appoint a workmen's National Inspector to inspect any New Zealand coal-mine on their behalf.

The percentage of fire-damp in the general body of the air in a working-place when the men have to be withdrawn therefrom is reduced from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 2.

Instead of requiring housing-accommodation for the workmen, the Minister, if he so desires, can require the owner of a coal-mine to contribute towards the cost of conveying the men to and from the mine.

Power is also given to make regulations requiring the workmen to use helmets, eye-goggles, and other equipment of a protective nature.

From the above summary it will be appreciated that special consideration has been given to the problem of greater safety for the mine-workers.

RESCUE-STATIONS.

The Coal-mines Amendment Act, 1936, made provision for the establishment of rescue-stations where considered desirable, and also empowered the Minister of Mines to impose a levy, not exceeding 1d. per ton, on the output of coal from the mines served by any particular station to meet the cost of its upkeep. The Grey-mouth area was decided upon as the district in which a rescue-station was most urgently required. A site was chosen in the Township of Dobson, which is strategically located to serve the principal mines. Plans and specifications were drawn up and a contract let for the erection of the station. The work is now well in hand, and the building should be completed in the next few months. All the necessary equipment has been obtained from Great Britain, and a special rescue motor-truck has been designed and built locally. Training classes in rescue-work have been continued at the Liverpool State Mine.

SOCIAL AMENITIES IN MINING TOWNSHIPS.

The recreation facilities provided at mining townships and referred to in previous statements continue to be used extensively by the miners and their families.

During the year new recreation facilities were made available at a number of townships, and it is pleasing to record that liberal support for their provision and for the maintenance of those already in existence was received from the coal-mine owners.

I have continued to make available small grants to libraries in mining centres for the purchase of educational and recreational books.

CARBONIZING AND BRIQUETTING.

The low - temperature coal - carbonizing and briquetting plant of Waikato Carbonization, Ltd., at Rotowaro, operated for ten months during 1937.

The following figures show the production during that period :—

Raw coal carbonized	..	..	..	38,888 tons.
Carbonized coal produced	..	..	..	19,033 tons.
Average percentage of carbonized coal to raw coal				49 per cent.
Carbonettes manufactured	..	..	..	22,913 tons.
Oil treated	..	..	..	335,068 gals.
Pitch produced	..	..	..	946 tons.
Light oil produced	..	..	..	62,605 gals.
Heavy oils	..	..	..	85,270 gals.