

I am gratified that, compared with 1936, over 8,000 tons of additional slack was carbonized, thus assisting in the problem of the disposal of slack coal in the Waikato area.

The briquetting plant of Briquettes Ltd., at Onchunga, produced 2,070 tons of briquettes during 1937.

For the twelve months ended 31st December, 1937, Smokeless Fuel and Briquettes (Canterbury), Ltd., produced 6,100 tons of briquettes at its works at Sockburn.

LABORATORY INVESTIGATIONS.

The Dominion Laboratory has carried out investigations and analyses on mineral samples, mine gases, coal samples, &c.

Prospectors' samples have been assayed for gold and silver and occasionally for other metals, notably tungsten.

During the year the physical and chemical survey of the coal resources of the Dominion has been proceeded with. The Laboratory is now fitted up and is working in conjunction with a geological field staff.

A report on the Blackburn area with two maps has been included in the annual report of the Geological Survey.

The field staff has commenced work in the Greymouth area with headquarters at Rewanui. Systematic and accurate sampling of the area is undertaken in conjunction with geological and survey work and the sealed samples forwarded to the Laboratory for complete analyses.

It is hoped to extend the activities of the work of the survey to assist the Mines Department in finding new areas for co-operative mining and in locating supplies of coal suitable for the proposed iron and steel industry.

PERSONS EMPLOYED IN OR ABOUT MINES AND STONE-QUARRIES.

The following table shows the number of persons employed in each inspection district during 1937 and 1936 :—

Classification.	Inspection District.			Totals.		
	Northern (North Island).	West Coast (of South Island).	Southern (rest of South Island).	1937.	1936.	Increase or Decrease.
Gold, silver, and tungsten ore	1,024	1,894	992	3,910	5,183	Dec. 1,273
Coal	1,478	1,956	983	4,417	4,257	Inc. 160
Stone-quarries under the Stone-quarries Act	1,602	92	423	2,117	1,981	Inc. 136
Oil	3	1	..	4	6	Dec. 2
Cinnabar	2	..	..	2	..	Inc. 2
Iron ore	1	..	..	1	..	Inc. 1
Totals	4,110	3,943	2,398	10,451	11,427	Dec. 976

The heavy drop shown in the number of persons employed in metalliferous mines is due principally to the diversion to other occupations of a large number of subsidized prospectors. It will be noted that the coal-mining industry found work for an additional 160 men during the year.

MINING AND QUARRY ACCIDENTS.

In metalliferous mines, at which 3,913 men were ordinarily employed, two persons were killed and nine persons seriously injured.

At stone-quarries under the Stone-quarries Act, employing 2,117 men, there was one fatal accident and four serious accidents.

In coal-mines, where 4,417 persons were ordinarily employed, six persons were killed and twenty-six persons seriously injured.