

colony. The amount of imports during 1883 has been 6,042 tons less than the previous year, while the production of coal from the mines of the colony during the same period has increased 43,492 tons. Taking the total imports for 1883, which have been 123,540 tons, and the total output from the mines in the colony for the same period, viz., 421,764 tons, it makes a total of 545,304 tons; of this amount, 7,172 tons have been exported, which leaves the consumption of coal within the colony during 1883 to be 538,132 tons, against 503,609 tons during the previous year: thus showing the increase over the consumption of 1882 to be 34,523 tons. The following table shows the progressive increase in the output, and the corresponding decrease in the amount imported into the colony, during the last six years:—

Year.	Coal raised in the Colony.		Coal Imported.		
	—	Yearly Increase.	—	Plus or Minus.	Increase or Decrease.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.		Tons.
1878	162,218	...	174,148
1879	231,218	69,000	158,076	—	16,072
1880	299,923	68,705	123,298	—	34,778
1881	337,262	37,339	129,962	+	6,664
1882	378,272	41,010	129,582	—	380
1883	421,764	43,492	123,540	—	6,042

The number of mines at work in 1882 was 96, and the number now standing on the list is 99, or 3 more than the previous year. The following table shows the number of mines, the number of men employed, and the output of coal during 1883:—

Number of Mines.	Number of Men employed in each Mine.	Total Number of Men employed.	Output of Coal in Tons.	Output in Tons per Man.
64 mines	1 to 4 men each ...	126	25,627	206
6 mines	5 to 10 men each ...	48	19,825	413
7 mines	11 to 20 men each ...	84	24,897	295
20 mines	21 men and upwards ...	991	351,415	354
2 mines	No men employed.			
99 mines		1,249	421,767	

By analyzing the above table it will be seen that there are 64 mines, in which 126 men are employed, producing 206 tons of coal per man per annum; while the total number of men employed in all the mines have produced 338 tons per man per annum. It should be explained that a considerable number of the 64 mines are merely lignite quarries, from which coal is dug out at certain seasons of the year for local consumption only. If these are deducted the average output per man amounts to 353 tons.

In some of the mines there is a large number of men employed at dead-work, as in the case of the Wallsend Mine, at Greymouth, where there are 50 men engaged at erecting machinery and sinking a shaft, and have produced no coal during the year. Yet, nevertheless the mines in their present state of development compare in their output not unfavourably with those in the United Kingdom, whose output per man during 1883 amounted to 346 tons, or only 8 tons per man more than the output from the mines of the colony.

The total average number of men employed in the coal mines in 1882 was 1,043 and 1,249 in 1883, being an increase of 206 men over the number employed in 1882. The Return No. 1, following the Appendix, shows in detail the number of men employed, and the output of coal from the various mines, together with other information; and Return No. 3 contains a statement by the Secretary of Customs of coal imports and exports during the year 1883. The following is a summary of the output of coal from the several mining districts, showing the comparative increase and decrease for the years 1882 and 1883, together with the total approximate amount of coal produced since the mines were opened:—