

The total expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1944, amounted to £10,059, as against £9,780 for the previous year.

The amount standing to the credit of the fund at the 31st March, 1945, was £7,199, as against £11,391 at the 31st March, 1944.

COAL SURVEY

The work of surveying the coal resources of the Dominion was continued under the general direction of a committee which comprised the Director of the Dominion Laboratory (Chairman), the Director of the Geological Survey, the Chief Inspector of Coal-mines, the Superintendent of State Mines, the geologist in charge of field operations, the chemist in charge of laboratory investigations, and the Assistant Director, Dominion Laboratory, as Secretary.

Field work was centred mainly in West Coast and Ohai fields. Reports were also made on Huntly (stripping areas), Tatu, Mangapehi, Waitewhena, Elliotvale, and Orepuke.

Laboratory work was mainly concerned with the analysis of coals and the examination of coal ashes.

STATE COAL-MINES

The gross output from State mines for the year ended 31st March, 1945, increased by 237,576 tons to 762,231 tons, which is equivalent to 27.16 per cent. of the New Zealand production.

Included in the output are 115,263 tons from opencasts and 142,350 tons from mines acquired during the year.

Conditions at the Liverpool Colliery remained difficult, and a further decrease of 13,531 tons in output was recorded. The stone drive to connect with the Morgan dip workings has now been completed, and with the arrival from England of additional haulage equipment it is anticipated that there will be a steady increase in output.

The Strongman Colliery showed an increase of 1,413 tons over the previous year. As was the case last year, production was mainly from solid places with the addition of a small amount of pillar coal which was obtained from an area in No. 1 North section between two faults. Extraction in this area has been completed and sealed off. Numerous faults encountered have hampered development during the year.

Although there has been no improvement in water and roof conditions at the Blackball Colliery, the output for the year increased by 12,807 tons. The major portion of the output was again won from development, the coal remaining friable and with no increase in the make of screened. The presence of sulphuric acid in the mine water has complicated pumping problems.

Conditions at the Wallsend Colliery showed no appreciable change during the year, when a small decrease in output was recorded.

The boring at Dobson indicated the extension of the seam ahead of the present workings, but confined to a narrow strip. Troubled country and heavy haulage costs will probably prevent the extension of the seam being worked from the present mine.

Pillar-extraction has been commenced in some sections of the Tatu Colliery, where the output increased by 2,460 tons. The installation of electrical haulages and pumping systems has facilitated the handling of coal and water.

Mangapehi Colliery experienced a difficult year. Since pillar-extraction has commenced the coal has shown itself to be very fiery and the management has had an anxious time with heating and fires. Development work continues satisfactorily.

The Stockton Mine, which was purchased on 1st July, 1944, continued to work satisfactorily. The Stockton Opencast commenced production on 20th November, 1944, and despite atrocious weather conditions produced 24,892 tons.

The Mossbank Colliery was acquired on 9th October, 1944. The lay out of the colliery makes working conditions difficult and the coal contains an unusually high number of stone bands.

Wilton Collieries (1934), Ltd., disposed of their mine to the Government on the 20th October, 1944. Development of the No. 3 extended mine and pillar-extraction in Nos. 1 and 2 has been continued. The coal is of good quality and development is proceeding satisfactorily.

The Wairaki Mine was acquired on the 27th January, 1945. The extraction of pillars in the No. 1 mine and the development of No. 3 has been continued.

Owing to extremely wet weather the Glen Afton Opencast ceased production during the winter months, and since reopening in December has produced 12,029 tons.

Kimihia Opencast (areas 2 and 4) opened in July and produced 47,871 tons to the 31st March. The amount of coal in these areas is not large, but will be sufficient to last until the No. 1 Kimihia Lake area is started about July. The contractor has successfully completed the stop-bank, and dewatering is proceeding satisfactorily.

The Beehive Opencast, at Glen Massey, produced altogether 4,009 tons. The coal was a small block left by Waipa Collieries adjacent to the outcrop. The coal was won principally during the Christmas holidays and helped the railways over a difficult period.

Kemps Opencast, Glen Massey, commenced production on 22nd December, 1944, and up till 31st March 6,874 tons of coal were won. The coal is of a hard close-grained nature and is contained in two relatively thin seams.

Ohai Opencast was purchased at the same time as the Wairaki Mine. Excavation was right up with the stripping when taken over, and the lack of suitable equipment, together with a fire in old opencast workings, hampered development. Only 704 tons were produced to 31st March, 1945, but the opencast has been producing satisfactorily since that date.

Waitewhena Opencast produced 18,884 tons, practically all of which was supplied to the Railways Department. Operations were hampered by a very wet season.

Full details in respect of the operations and financial results of the collieries appear in the annual report of the State Coal-mines (C. 2A).