

A geologist reported on the volcanic phenomena at Ruapehu during March and April.

Geological and geophysical examinations were made about Karapiro Dam and also about the proposed site at Maractai on the Waikato upstream from Arapuni Lake. A reconnaissance survey over some 250 square miles was carried out near the latter in order to assist in finding rock suitable for concrete aggregate. Geologists also reported on sites for engineering projects at the Cobb River, in the Clarence and Conway basins, at Black Jack's Point in the Waitaki Valley, and above Roxburgh in the Molyneux.

SCHOOLS OF MINES

The expenditure on the Schools of Mines for the year ended 31st March, 1945, was £3,989, as compared with £3,381 for the previous year. At the annual examination held in November, 1944, three scholarship candidates presented themselves for examination. Scholarships were awarded to two candidates who were both from the Otago School of Mines.

It is to be noted that candidates for scholarships were, as in last year, confined to the Otago School of Mines, no candidates being forthcoming from the district Schools of Mines. This is due in part to war conditions and the consequent depressed state of gold-mining, and in part to coal-mining students in these schools preferring to obtain such certificates as mine managers or underviewers and qualify for responsible positions in the industry rather than proceed to the Otago School of Mines for advanced tuition. While this serves to maintain a flow of qualified officials into the mining industry and thereby performs a most useful service, it is to be regretted that conditions are not sufficiently attractive to allow of students benefiting by the sound basic training provided by the Otago School of Mines.

MINERS' BENEFITS

The provision for payment of a miner's benefit is contained in the Social Security Act, 1938, which has been operative since the 1st April, 1939. One of the necessary conditions precedent to payment of the benefit is that the applicant should be seriously and permanently incapacitated by miners' phthisis or totally incapacitated by heart or other occupational disease associated with mining service in New Zealand.

The rate of benefit for the miner is 32s. 6d. a week, and this may be increased by 10s. 6d. a week in respect of the wife. There is provision for the payment of a grant of 10s. 6d. a week for each dependent child under the age of sixteen years, with a maximum grant in any particular case of £5 weekly, but the benefit in respect of the children is reducible by all income of the family, other than the miner's benefit, in excess of £2 a week.

The widow of a miner who died while in receipt of a benefit may be granted a benefit of 20s. a week during widowhood.

This scheme, which originated with the Miners' Phthisis Act, 1915, is administered by the Social Security Commission, and the following is a summary of the operations for the year ended 31st March, 1945:—

MINERS' BENEFITS		£
Payments from 1st November, 1915 to 31st March, 1944	1,500,300
Payments, 1944-45	74,367
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> £1,574,667 <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>
Number of new grants for year 1944-45—		
Males	25
Females	5
		---- 30
Number of benefits in force at 31st March, 1945 (including 2 emergency grants) --		
Males	679
Females	106
		---- 785
Annual value of benefits in force at 31st March, 1945..	£73,197
Average benefit per annum	£93 3s. 7d.
Number of children in respect of benefits in force at 31st March, 1945 ..		153
Dissection of benefits in force at 31st March, 1945—		
Single miners	230
Married miners	447
Widows	108
		---- 785

ALUMINIUM DUST THERAPY FOR SILICOSIS

Recent research in Canada by McIntyre Research, Ltd., has established the value of aluminium dust treatment as a prophylactic for silicosis, and it is now confidently expected that the systematic use of this treatment will prevent the development of new cases of silicosis.

The treatment is in no sense a cure for persons already suffering from the disease, nor is it a substitute for dust-prevention measures in mines.

Naturally, these developments in Canada have been closely followed, and when it was learned that Dr. W. D. Robson, Medical Director of McIntyre Research, Ltd., was likely to visit Australia in the near future, steps were taken to ascertain if he would visit New Zealand to advise the Government on silicosis.

No finality has yet been reached as Dr. Robson's plans are still indefinite, but every effort is being made to secure his services.