

Portland.—During the year four bores of a total depth of 599 ft. were drilled by the Department for Wilson's (N.Z.) Portland Cement Co. at Portland to determine the extent of suitable limestone for the company's requirements.

Kaka.—Drilling of a most difficult nature was carried out at Kaka, in the Nelson district, for the Temuka Insulators, Ltd., to locate feldspathic clay. Fifteen bores were drilled having a total depth of 1,060 ft.

Stockton.—In the early part of the year drilling which had been proceeding for some months in the previous year was terminated.

A number of bores were drilled in the vicinity of D Hill for the purpose of establishing coal thicknesses and depths before opening up that section as an underground mine. Drilling will be recommenced at a later date when a new machine more suitable for the work comes to hand and when further mapping and geology is completed.

Ohai.—A percussion drill has been in operation near the Bar 20 Opencast for some months to determine the coal and overburden thicknesses near that mine.

It is found that close drilling is required in that locality and the machine will be in operation for some time.

A new diamond drill and equipment was despatched in August to Ohai to start an extensive drilling programme in the Ohai district generally. The first bore was drilled in the New Brighton area with not very encouraging results, but the machine has now been shifted to the Morley area and drilling is in progress.

Drilling already completed has confirmed the drilling results obtained by the former owners of this area, and it is estimated that some 5,000,000 tons of coal have already been proved in the section drilled. Drilling is continuing in this locality.

COAL-MINES COUNCIL

The Coal-mines Council was fully engaged throughout the year in hearing and deciding minor disputes at coal-mines. All the mining fields in the Dominion were visited, and it is pleasing to record that acceptable solutions to all difficulties were found and that time lost through strikes was reduced to a minimum.

SCHOOLS OF MINES

The expenditure on Schools of Mines for the year ended 31st March, 1946, was £4,190. For the previous year the amount was £3,989. Two candidates from the Otago School of Mines were awarded scholarships at the annual examination.

The decline of the metal-mining industry in recent years means that opportunities of employment in New Zealand for graduates of the Otago School of Mines now approach the vanishing point.

In the past very few of the graduates have been attracted to the coal-mining industry and the majority have preferred to seek positions overseas.

Both the Mines Department and the University staff consider this a highly undesirable state of affairs, and a survey is being undertaken with the object of organizing a scheme which will provide sufficient inducements to bring qualified men from the Otago University into the technical force of the coal-mining industry.

RESCUE STATIONS

The Dobson, Rotowaro, and Ohai Mines rescue stations rendered valuable service to the industry during the year.

New teams have been trained and refresher courses conducted for trained men. The teams have successfully controlled numerous cases of underground fires and heating.