

WAIKATO COAL-MINES CONTROL

The mines owned by Glen Afton Collieries, Ltd., Pukemiro Collieries, Ltd., Renown Collieries, Ltd., and Taupiri Coal Mines, Ltd., were operated during the year under the provisions of the Waikato Coal-mines Control Emergency Regulations 1942.

During the year ended 31st March, 1948, the sum of £179,104 17s. was expended in respect of claims for guaranteed profits for companies' financial years ending in 1947 and in administration costs, making the total amount paid to date under the control scheme £589,858 1s. 6d.

The amount paid for the year ended 31st March, 1948, represents final settlement of all claims, with the exception of that from Taupiri Coal Mines, Ltd., for the year ended 31st March, 1947. In this case a progress payment of £40,000 has been made.

CARBONIZING AND BRIQUETTING

The production of the low-temperature coal carbonizing and briquetting plant of Waikato Carbonization, Ltd., at Rotowaro during 1947 was:—

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|--|----|----|----|----|------------------|
| Raw coal carbonized | .. | .. | .. | .. | 21,982 tons. |
| Carbonized coal produced | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10,592 tons. |
| Average percentage of carbonized to raw coal | .. | .. | .. | .. | 49 per cent. |
| Carbonettes manufactured | .. | .. | .. | .. | 11,353 tons. |
| Tar and oil treated | .. | .. | .. | .. | 188,457 gallons. |
| Pitch produced | .. | .. | .. | .. | 158 tons. |
| Light and heavy oils produced | .. | .. | .. | .. | 120,944 gallons. |
| Char sold for producer gas plants | .. | .. | .. | .. | Nil. |
| Char sold for other purposes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 813 tons. |

For the same period Smokeless Fuel and Briquettes (Canterbury), Ltd., produced 21,624 gallons of tar, 56 tons of briquettes, and 3,574 tons of metallurgical coke.

Early in the present year arrangements were made whereby Mr. A. B. Jones, manager of Waikato Carbonization, Ltd., who has been acting as consulting engineer to the Mines Department on briquetting problems, was able to proceed overseas and investigate modern practice in briquetting and other forms of coal-processing. Mr. Jones has now returned to New Zealand and his report upon the results of his investigations will be available at an early date.

MINERALS OTHER THAN GOLD

The trend that has been disclosed in previous Statements in the development of these minerals continued during the present year. Despite a certain amount of interest due to the world shortage of base metals and the resulting high prices ruling for these metals and their ores, so far this interest has not been translated into practical mining activity and the production of such ores remains of little importance.

On the other hand, production of the non-metallic minerals tends to increase, in particular such minerals as have value as fertilizers such as limestone and serpentine, dolomite and magnesite. Production of clays shows a considerable increase, but this is due in great part to the better statistical information that is becoming available as the importance of these minerals is more fully realized. It is becoming increasingly apparent that after coal the future of New Zealand's mineral industry lies mainly in the development of its non-metallic minerals, and accordingly the mineral-production tabulation this year shows the production of such minerals in greater detail than formerly.

Scheelite.—Despite the high price of approximately £500 per ton prevailing during the year, there was a further decline in the production of scheelite concentrates, the equivalent of 22 tons of concentrates assaying 65 per cent. WO_3 being produced and shipped during 1947, as against 27 tons in 1946, 34 tons in 1945, and 145 tons in 1944,