

In the Ohai field, both the Black Diamond Opencast and McLean's Opencast, situated in the State Star Coal-mine area, continued to make satisfactory progress. During the present year the original No. 1 area at McLean's has become exhausted, and attention has now been directed towards an adjoining section No. 5, and production will shortly be forthcoming from this latter section. An intensive search for potential opencast areas has been made and is continuing to be made in the Ohai field, and so far seven areas are in some process of investigation. There are indications that one of these may be a large tonnage proposition with a considerable thickness of overburden in places, and consequently detailed prospecting is required to determine whether opencast mining would be economic or otherwise. As a greater degree of geological knowledge becomes available and the structure of the field can be more accurately interpreted, it is becoming apparent that there are considerable possibilities in the Ohai field for opencast mining, and as time and opportunity permit, these will all be investigated.

The following table shows the output of coal from the various coalfields and the comparative increases and decreases for the years 1949 and 1948, together with approximate total production to date :—

| Coalfield.                           | Output.   |           | Increase. | Decrease. | Approximate Total Output up to 31st December, 1949. |       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---|-------|
|                                      | 1949.     | 1948.     |           |           | Tons.   | Tons. |
|                                      | Tons.     | Tons.     | Tons.     | Tons.     | Tons.   |       |
| North Auckland .. .. .               | 56,485    | 50,804    | 5,681     | ..        | 6,713,609   |       |
| Waikato (including Taranaki) .. .. . | 1,016,573 | 964,384   | 52,189    | ..        | 26,800,200  |       |
| Nelson .. .. .                       | 7,123     | 6,854     | 269       | ..        | 779,778   |       |
| Buller .. .. .                       | 466,452   | 527,593   | ..        | 61,141    | 31,040,839  |       |
| Reefton .. .. .                      | 104,524   | 119,104   | ..        | 14,580    | 2,175,079   |       |
| Grey .. .. .                         | 530,427   | 490,328   | 40,099    | ..        | 23,509,730  |       |
| Canterbury .. .. .                   | 31,441    | 32,030    | ..        | 589       | 1,471,482   |       |
| Otago .. .. .                        | 199,549   | 205,931   | ..        | 6,382     | 15,946,790  |       |
| Southland .. .. .                    | 400,701   | 378,858   | 21,843    | ..        | 11,780,379  |       |
| Totals .. .. .                       | 2,813,275 | 2,775,886 | 114,981   | 82,692    | 120,217,886   |       |

The outputs of the various classes of coal mined in each inspection district were :—

| Class of Coal.          | Northern District (North Island). | West Coast District (South Island). | Southern District (South Island). | Total.    | Total Output to 31st December, 1949. |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
|                         | Tons.                             | Tons.                               | Tons.                             |           |                                      |
| Anthracite .. .. .      | ..                                | ..                                  | 1,885                             | 1,885     | 20,562                               |
| Bituminous .. .. .      | ..                                | 934,802                             | ..                                | 934,802   | 63,273,177                           |
| Sub-bituminous .. .. .  | 1,073,058                         | 138,632                             | 366,218                           | 1,577,908 | 49,197,697                           |
| Lignite .. .. .         | ..                                | 35,092                              | 263,588                           | 298,680   | 7,726,450                            |
| Totals for 1949 .. .. . | 1,073,058                         | 1,108,526                           | 631,691                           | 2,813,275 | 120,217,886                          |
| Totals for 1948 .. .. . | 1,015,188                         | 1,143,879                           | 616,819                           | 2,775,886 | 117,404,611                          |