

Returns of output from the provinces are as follows:—

	Tons.
Canterbury .. .. .	23,527
Otago .. .. .	307,562
Southland .. .. .	98,277
Southland (oil-shale) .. .. .	36
<b>Total</b> .. .. .	<b>429,402</b>
Output for previous year .. .. .	419,179
<b>Increase</b> .. .. .	<b>10,223</b>

The contributions to the Coal-miners' Relief Fund amounted to £429 13s. 5d., while payments from the Fund to the amount of £314 9s. 10d. have been recommended.

#### ACCIDENTS.

Seventy-seven accidents—two fatal and seventy-five non-fatal—were reported to me during the year, of which one fatal and forty-eight non-fatal occurred at the Kaitangata Mines, the proportion of accidents to number of men employed being greater at these collieries than at other mines in the district. The non-fatal accidents were principally of a slight nature, and such as appear to be incidental to mining-work.

In all cases the accidents were investigated, and in serious cases reports were furnished to you, while the claims of applicants, together with the interests of the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, had been carefully safeguarded.

The number of eye-accidents has been reduced to eight for the year, a reduction of nearly 100 per cent. over the previous year. Gauze shields for protection of miners' eyes are in general use when working in proud or flying coal.

Falls of coal and stone from roof had been productive of fourteen accidents, two of which proved fatal; and in another instance (Beardsmore) resulted in practical disablement for two years at least.

#### *Fatal Accidents.*

18th June, 1903.—Henry Currie, miner, Nightcaps Colliery: A block of coal fell from an invisible parting in roof at face. Due precautions had been taken; double rows of props set close up to working-face.

3rd July, 1903.—George Hill, miner, Castle Hill Mine: While in the act of filling loose coal from a shot fired fifteen minutes previously a loose flake came away from the roof, striking deceased on the temple.

#### *Non-fatal Accidents.*

4th March, 1903.—W. Ratcliffe, Fortification Colliery: Neurosis of right radius said to have been caused by injury sustained while carrying rails underground.

6th March, 1903.—J. Beardsmore, miner, Kaitangata Mine: Bruised back, resulting in rotation of two of the vertebræ—fall of stone from roof at face.

29th May, 1903.—John Dick, miner, Kaitangata Mine: Bruises on thigh—struck by runaway box on heading.

6th October, 1903.—J. Alexander, roadsman and duly appointed shot-firer, Kaitangata Mine: Fracture of right humerus—fall of stone from roof.

I have, &c.,

E. R. GREEN,

Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.