

New collieries on an extensive scale are being opened up by the Paparoa Coal-mining Company (Limited), near Greymouth; by the Westport-Stockton Coal Company (Limited), near Millerton, Westport; and by the Northern Collieries Company, at Hikurangi. Preparations for a greater annual production have been made at most of the larger mines, so that an annually increasing output of coal may be anticipated. The coastal plain on the western side of the Westport collieries, under which it is reasonably assumed that the coal-measures exist, are receiving attention, and two leases have been taken up for working the same. Mr. Jonathan Dixon, M.E., one of the leaseholders, proposes to immediately test the ground by diamond drills.

A seam of coal of considerable thickness and fair quality has recently been discovered at Avoca, on the Tangowahine Stream, within seven miles and easily accessible from the timber-shipping port of Tangowahine, on the Northern Wairoa River. The geological formation of the locality of the discovery appears to indicate the existence of a coalfield of considerable area.

#### STATE COAL-MINES.

Operations at the State coal-mines have been extended, and depots are now established at Wellington, Christchurch, and Wanganui for the sale of the coal to the public. The result of prospecting on the coal-reserve in the vicinity of the Point Elizabeth Colliery has disclosed valuable seams of coal of a highly bituminous nature. The profits of both State mines during the financial year ending 31st March, 1907, amounted to £8,460 19s. 1d.

In connection with the Seddonville State Coal-mine a briquette-manufactory has been established at Westport, and commenced experimental operations in June, 1907. The character of the Seddonville bituminous coal is eminently adapted for the manufacture of a high-quality briquette fuel. The plant is capable, when in full working-order, of manufacturing 1,000 tons per week.

#### KAURI-GUM.

One of the principal mineral exports of this country consists of fossil resin, the product of ancient forests of the kauri pine. This mineral occurs in great abundance in the northern part of the Auckland Province, from the North Cape to middle Waikato, over an approximate area of 814,000 acres.

The export of kauri-gum for the year 1906 was 9,154 tons (value £522,486), being a decrease of 1,729 tons (value £38,958) on the previous year's output.

The total export of this mineral had, at the end of 1906, reached 275,319 tons (value £13,443,017), and about five thousand diggers are engaged on the gumfields of the colony.

#### COPPER.

Owing to the high price of this metal considerable attention has been drawn to this branch of mining, and properties upon which work has been for some time suspended have again resumed operations.

In the North Island, near Whangaroa, active prospecting operations are being carried out by three syndicates. Near Woodville the Maharahara Copper-mines (Limited), an Auckland company, are further testing the large lode upon which many years ago a considerable sum of money was spent at a time when copper had a very much less market value than at present.

In the South Island, at Aniseed Valley, near Nelson, the Maoriland Copper Company has recently been formed to work the areas formerly owned by the Champion Company, and in connection with which smelting-works were erected twenty years ago. From this property two shipments of five hundred bags of ore (equal to 50 tons) have recently been exported to New South Wales for treatment at the Great Cobar Smelter.