

latest quartz-mining discoveries in the Dominion, good returns have been reported, bullion to the value of over £30,000 having been obtained, of which one-half has been distributed in dividends.

Some attention has recently been given to developing the Macetown and Barewood quartz reefs in Otago, and also to prospecting the Wilberforce and Cedar Creek reefs in Westland, as well as the Mokihinui reefs in the Buller district.

The general prosperity of the quartz-mining industry of New Zealand is clearly demonstrated by the fact that during the year 1908 £561,833, equivalent to 38 per cent. of the bullion won, has been paid in dividends.

COAL-MINING.

The most important feature in connection with the coal-mining industry during the year has been the activity displayed on the West Coast bituminous-coal fields, where several new collieries are being developed and will soon be ready to place coal on the market. On the Waikato Coalfield the Taupiri Coal Company (Limited), by the acquisition of neighbouring properties and of mineral rights over private lands, have increased their extensive holdings to an area of about 15,000 acres, embracing thereby a block of land about eleven miles in length, situated in a most accessible part of the field, and traversed by the Main Trunk Railway and the navigable Waikato River.

TOTAL PRODUCTION.

The production of coal for the past year is the highest yet attained, being 1,860,975 tons. The output from the three mining districts is shown in the following table:—

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT of COAL and LIGNITE raised during the Years 1906, 1907, and 1908.

Inspection District.	Output for 1908.	Increase or Decrease, 1907 and 1908.		Output for 1907.	Increase or Decrease, 1906 and 1907.	
	Tons.	Increase	Tons.	Tons.	Increase	Tons.
Northern	344,927	Increase	27,950	316,977	Increase	15,791
West Coast	1,063,566	"	11,544	1,052,022	"	89,107
Southern	452,482	Decrease	9,528	462,010	Decrease	3,425
Totals	1,860,975	Increase	29,966	1,831,009	Increase	101,473

The comparative tonnage of the various classes of coal, &c., for the years 1907 and 1908 is summarised as follows:—

Class of Coal.	Output for 1908.	Output for 1907.	Increase or Decrease for 1908.	
	Tons.	Tons.	Increase	Tons.
Bituminous and semi-bituminous	1,205,212	1,184,211	Increase	21,001
Pitch-coal	17,459	22,060	Decrease	4,601
Brown coal	539,141	515,797	Increase	23,344
Lignite	99,163	108,941	Decrease	9,778
Totals	1,860,975	1,831,009	Increase	29,966

The quantity would have been very much greater had it not been for the increased annual importation of coal from New South Wales. The total recorded output of the various classes of coal, lignite, and oil-shale is now 27,122,939 tons. With the additional production from the several collieries now in course of development on an extensive scale, I anticipate a substantial reduction in the price of coal in the immediate future.