

sir, that these figures will demonstrate to honourable members, and impress upon them, the enormous benefits derived by the community through the granting of judicious and generous assistance towards developing our vast mineral resources.

From the tables attached an analysis may easily be made of the decline of our mineral productions from 1870 to 1890, and also of their gradual progress between 1890 and 1909. An examination of these tables is both interesting and instructive.

I informed the House last year that some inquiries had been made by private parties with a view of obtaining water-rights for generating electrical energy for mining and other purposes: since then a water-power license to develop 10,000-horse power at the Horahora Falls has been granted to the Waihi Gold-mining Company.

In view of the scientific improvements in the most modern methods of generating and transmitting electrical energy, and the enormous possibilities of the numerous water-powers available in this Dominion, increased energy in the development of our mineral assets may safely be anticipated. Several of our mines have already installed, or are installing, electrical machinery for traction, lighting, pumping, and other purposes, and as soon as some of our easiest-exploited water-powers are utilized considerable expansion in electrical energy for mining purposes will certainly follow, and mineral areas which are at present useless will become valuable.

The increased energy displayed in our mining industry during the last year is evidenced by the very substantial increase of £255,456 in our mineral-output.

The coal-mines of the Dominion have had a period of activity, the output for the year being a record. It is also interesting to note that the coal-output of the Dominion has doubled during the last decade. Two of the large new collieries on the West Coast which were last year being developed are now coal-producers, and will add largely to our supply of bituminous coal.

While last year I had occasion to deplore the decline in our kauri-gum export, I am now pleased to inform honourable members that this branch of our industries shows a largely increased output. This may, however, be accounted for, to some extent at least, by considerable quantities of the gum having been held in store pending an improvement in the prices ruling in the European and American markets.

Slight increases have taken place in the production of gold and silver.

A small decrease is discernible in the outputs of copper-ore, antimony, scheelite, and other minerals; but, while the production of these has been proceeding for many years, they have not yet got beyond the experimental stage of development.

As our mining data is compiled up to the 31st December in each year, and not published until laid before Parliament several months afterwards, complaints are being continually made by British newspapers and parties interested in mining that the information contained in our official mining records becomes stale and often useless before it reaches people at a distance who are interested in our mining industry. I am of opinion that an improvement would be effected by authorizing the publication in the *Government Gazette* of the required information as soon as available.

MINERAL-PRODUCTION.

While New Zealand contains a large variety of minerals such as copper, iron, mineral oils, shale, scheelite, antimony, and many others, the attention of our mining community has hitherto been almost entirely confined to the development of gold, coal, and kauri-gum, and, during recent years, silver, which has become an important item in our mineral products. Amongst the undeveloped minerals our iron- and copper-ore deposits, together with our well-known mineral-oil resources, offer excellent opportunity for energetic operations.

The value of the bullion exported from New Zealand from January, 1853, until December, 1909, was £76,987,763, while the total value of the mineral-production of the Dominion up to the end of December last has been £107,849,896.