

GOVERNMENT PROSPECTING-DRILLS.

The demand for the diamond and placer drills, which are lent free of charge, has declined somewhat, owing no doubt to the difficulty in obtaining capital for mining ventures during the present crisis.

By the use of one of these drills a very important discovery of bituminous coal was made at the Liverpool State Colliery during this year, which is referred to elsewhere in this Statement.

GOVERNMENT WATER-RACES.

The Waimea-Kumara and Mount Ida water-races, which are maintained by the Government to enable alluvial gold-mining to be carried on in the Kumara and Naseby districts, have supplied 105 miners during the year, by whom gold to the value of £25,675 was obtained.

The receipts for water sold amounted to £3,493, and the expenditure in upkeep and supervision was £3,782.

GOLD-MINERS' RELIEF FUND.

This fund, which was inaugurated by the passing of the Mining Act Amendment Act, 1910, is still unfinancial, the credit balance on the 31st March last being only £51 12s., against unpaid claims amounting to over £1,175. During the year payments from the fund amounted to £2,123, and the contributions thereto were £1,716.

With the view of assisting the fund to meet its obligations a special vote of £900 was taken on last year's appropriations, for allowances to sufferers from pneumoconiosis. The amount actually paid out of this special vote during the year was £705, but regular allowances are being paid to several incapacitated miners; and to enable these to be continued, and other urgent cases to be met from time to time as occasion requires, a further vote of £900 is provided on the estimates for the current year.

COAL-MINERS' RELIEF FUND.

As required by the Coal-mines Act, 1908, the owner of every coal-mine contributes $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton on all the coal he sells, for the relief of coal-miners who may be injured whilst working, and for the relief of the families of coal-miners who may be killed or injured.

The following is a statement of the accounts of the fund during the two last financial years:—

	Year ended 31st March, 1915.	Year ended 31st March, 1914.
	£	£
Contributions	2,068	1,893
Allowance on account of accidents, &c.	2,782	1,720
Balance	6,320	7,034