

In the foregoing statement a decrease of 188,716 tons is shown in the annual output; for such decrease the bituminous-coal mines of the West Coast are responsible for 148,875 tons; but at all the coalfields, except Waikato and Inangahua, the output for 1917 was less than that of the preceding year. The decline in the coal-production was due to restriction of output at some mines during the first four months of the year; also to the reduction in the number of miners employed underground. In Otago damage by flood during the early part of the year caused temporary suspension of work at some mines.

The quantity of coal imported into the Dominion during 1917 was 291,597 tons, as against 293,956 during 1916; the quantity exported being 228,843 tons, as against 331,675 during the previous year.

The production from, and the number of persons employed at, the principal collieries of the Dominion are shown in the following table:—

Name of Colliery.	Locality.	Class of Coal.	Output for 1917.	Total Output to 31st December, 1917.	Total Number of Persons ordinarily employed.
<i>Northern District.</i>					
Hikurangi	Hikurangi...	Semi-bituminous	Tons. 31,881	Tons. 1,099,922	95
Taupiri Extended	Huntly	Brown	192,205	2,182,181	339
Pukemiro	Pukemiro...	"	89,375	181,966	145
Waipa	Glen Massey	"	81,718	319,699	100
<i>West Coast District.</i>					
Coalbrookdale	Millerton	Bituminous	279,760	5,252,425	440
	Denniston	"	200,950	7,601,588	409
Westport-Stockton	Mangatini	"	167,122	1,203,492	280
	Point Elizabeth	Semi-bituminous	119,411	2,255,717	189
State Coal-mines	Liverpool	Bituminous	145,856	472,471	302
Blackball	Blackball	"	132,515	2,588,380	286
<i>Southern District.</i>					
Kaitangata and Castle Hill	Kaitangata	Brown	107,274	3,507,495	288
Nightcaps	Nightcaps	"	73,133	1,254,144	116
Other New Zealand collieries	All coalfields	Various	445,519	18,329,110	994
Totals			2,068,419	46,158,590	3,983

The only new colliery of importance which attained the output stage during the year was the Awaroa Colliery, the property of Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited), situated about six miles south-west from Huntly on a short branch line from the Huntly-Pukemiro Railway. At some of the principal collieries on the west coast of the South Island some coal areas which hitherto had remained inoperative, owing to difficulty of access, smallness of seam, or friability of coal, have been developed as a result of the increased price and considerable demand for coal of almost any class.

SECTION II.—PERSONS EMPLOYED.

Inspection District.	Average Number of Persons employed during 1917.		
	Above Ground.	Below Ground.	Total.
Northern	225	618	843
West Coast	590	1,596	2,186
Southern	275	679	954
Totals, 1917	1,090	2,893	3,983
Totals, 1916	988	3,000	3,988