

provident disposition saving enough money to enable him to eventually buy land, or take up a lighter occupation for advancing years. I have dwelt upon this subject at some length, hoping to remove the prevailing erroneous impression regarding the life of a coal-miner, and thus to encourage young men to give this lucrative occupation a fair trial; one of the most serious questions facing the Dominion at present being how to overcome the shortage of coal-miners.

While much has already been done to provide satisfactory dwelling-accommodation for coal-miners, there is no doubt that more still remains to be done. At the new State mine in the Waikato a township will be laid out on town-planning lines, with an efficient water service and good drainage system; and good comfortable residences for the miners will be built, and either let or sold to them as they may prefer; or they may lease or purchase sections and build houses themselves, provided that the designs of such houses are approved by the Department's Architect. Similar improvements, as far as now reasonably practicable, will also be made at Runanga (Greymouth).

A clause has also been inserted in this year's Coal-mines Amendment Bill requiring all colliery-owners to provide reasonable residence accommodation for their workmen, and to let same at reasonable rates. In cases where colliery-owners are unable to provide the requisite capital the Government may advance the same on mortgage at a reasonable rate of interest.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

During the past field season a detailed geological survey of the Mokau coalfield has been completed, and a full report is now in preparation. An area in the Waikokowai district, west of Huntly, was also carefully examined with a view to ascertaining its suitability for a State coal-mine. Various localities in the South Island were visited by officers of the Geological Survey in order to obtain information concerning coal, gold, limestone, phosphate rock, &c.

During the war the Geological Survey has been severely hampered in carrying out its work. Several officers have been lost by death or resignation, and one is still with the Expeditionary Forces. It is, however, proposed to appoint several new officers at an early date, and so restore the staff to at least its pre-war strength.

INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

The number of miners who succumbed to the epidemic during 1918 was ninety-two (twenty-six metal-miners and sixty-six coal-miners), being 1·39 per cent. of the number employed at or about all mines; the mortality among coal-miners being at the rate of 1·65 per cent., and that of metal-miners 1·0 per cent. The estimated average death-rate from the epidemic throughout the Dominion of all persons, including coal and metal miners, was about 0·6 per cent.

The following table shows the number of miners' deaths by epidemic and the number of miners employed in the Dominion during 1918:—

Inspection District.	Number of Deaths.	Number of Persons employed in or about Mines.	Percentage of Deaths.
Northern District (North Island)—			
Coal-mines	24	904	2·65
Metal-mines	14	1,277	1·09
West Coast District (of South Island)—			
Coal-mines	16	2,041	0·78
Metal-mines	10	2,582	0·38
Southern District (Canterbury, Otago, and Southland)—			
Coal-mines	26	1,049	2·47
Metal-mines	2	542	0·37
Totals (coal-mines)	66	3,944	1·65
,, (metal-mines)	26	2,582	1·00