

1929.

NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT

BY THE HON. W. A. VEITCH, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

I have the honour to present to Parliament my first annual Statement on the mining industry of the Dominion for the year ended the 31st December, 1928.

It is pleasing to report that during the year 1928 the output of coal from the mines of the Dominion was a record, being over 70,000 tons more than the quantity produced in any previous year. This result was due largely to the utilization by the railways of more locally-mined instead of imported coal, and also to the commendable action of gas companies in obtaining greater quantities of their requirements within the Dominion. Tests carried out by the blending of different classes of New Zealand coal have proved that by using suitable mixtures the results for gas-making purposes are not inferior to those obtained from imported bituminous coal.

The absence of industrial trouble of a serious character has been one of the pleasing features of the coal-mining industry, and is evidence that a spirit of goodwill exists between employers and employees. That this condition will continue to prevail is earnestly to be hoped.

With the knowledge gained from investigations carried out in the Dominion Laboratory, as well as in countries abroad, it is considered that in the near future it should be possible to considerably curtail coal importations, and, by adopting some of the proved carbonizing processes now in operation abroad, eliminate much waste and secure better and greater results from carbonized fuel.

While it is gratifying that the quantity of bullion production during the year 1928 shows an increase of 26,494 oz. over that of the preceding year, still it is a matter of regret that there has not been a genuine revival in this important industry. The discovery of new and payable goldfields would give an impetus to mining generally and materially help to remove some of our existing troubles, and to some extent relieve unemployment. A general feeling of optimism, however, prevails amongst prospectors and those who have invested their capital in search of precious metals, and much energy is now being devoted to devising means of extracting bullion from lodes of low grade, which it is believed exist in several parts of the Dominion.

The search for oil still continues in different parts of both the North and South Islands. Prospecting for oil necessitates the expenditure of large sums of money in preliminary surveys and boring. Up to the present time the location of a commercially payable oil-well, as the result of boring in recent years, has not eventuated, but it is hoped that success will ultimately attend the efforts of those who are now engaged upon the work.