The quantity of coal imported into New Zealand in 1938 was 109,206 tons, as compared with 116,499 tons for the previous year, a welcome reduction of 6·27 per cent.

The output of the several classes of coal mined in each inspection district is summarized as follows :—

Class of Coal.	Output of Coal during 1938.				Total Output to the End of 1938.
	Northern District (North Island).	West Coast District (South Island).	Southern District (South Island).	Total.	
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Bituminous and sub-bituminous	44,838	933,012	..	977,850	51,784,420
Brown	717,879	50,231	344,304	1,112,414	33,291,193
Lignite	..	1,146	130,678	131,824	5,401,817
Totals for 1938 ..	762,717	984,389	474,982	2,222,088	90,477,430
Totals for 1937 ..	778,498	975,228	524,073	2,277,799	88,255,342

WASTAGE OF COAL.

I am happy to say that the tremendous improvement effected in regard to the wastage of slack coal during the last three years has been maintained.

NEW AVENUES OF COAL-UTILIZATION.

Surveys of our coal resources have been continued, and further references to the work carried out appear later in this statement.

DOBSON RESCUE-STATION.

The new rescue-station at Dobson was completed in April, 1939, and lectures are now being conducted in the building by a competent officer of the Department. Instruction is being imparted to teams of selected men from the Dobson, Wallsend, Blackball, Paparoa, Briandale, and State Collieries and from nearby small co-operative mines.

Twenty sets of Proto self-contained breathing-apparatus were imported from England and are now in use at the station. For charging the small steel cylinders of the Protos by a special type of pump which had to be imported, a supply of oxygen in large cylinders is kept at the station and is replenished from Christchurch.

The teams are trained to use an up-to-date oxygen and carbon-dioxide inhalator by which two unconscious persons can be resuscitated simultaneously, and also to use smoke helmets, of which there are two types at the station.

The station itself has been erected in reinforced concrete and consists of seven rooms, the largest being the demonstrating-chamber in which the trainees wear the Protos in an irrespirable atmosphere for periods gradually increasing in length until the full two-hour maximum is reached. While wearing the apparatus they perform tasks similar to the class of work they are required to undertake in a coal-mine.

Outside the demonstrating-chamber are observation and lecture rooms, and beyond the observation room is a change-house equipped with hot and cold showers.

Under the same roof as the rescue-station is a large concrete garage in which is stored a fully equipped rescue van to convey brigades and apparatus to any mine in which a fire has broken out or in which an explosion has occurred. The van is so designed that it can be used as an ambulance van if required.