

The engineer who made the survey had evidently got very confused; whether he had mixed up the upper with the lower workings, it was impossible to say, but certain it was that as soon as the neighbourhood of the shaft was left the plan lost all resemblance to the mine, both in the upper and lower levels. The manager, Mr. George Foote, acknowledged he could not understand the plan, but he had waited till I came, to see if I could explain it. Without relying on the plan, my general knowledge of the mine enabled me to direct him to secure those places in the low level where I believed the upper workings were undermined. I brought back the plan with me to Auckland and explained matters to Mr. Foote, the owner. We called on the engineer who made the survey, and he promised to rectify the plan. Soon after this Mr. Foote died, and since then very little coal has been raised from the mine; and for some months work has been entirely suspended, with the exception of occasionally pumping the water in order to prevent the workings from being flooded. The intention of the sons of the late Mr. Foote is, I believe, to dispose of the property. On my recent visit I found no one at the mine, the solitary individual left there to work the pumping-engine being probably out pig-hunting. I searched about and found a candle, and went down the shaft and examined the whole mine, both in the upper and lower levels, except the portion in the immediate neighbourhood of the bottom of the shaft, which was under water. My instructions in regard to timbering seem to have been very fairly carried out, as directed by me on my previous visit; but I would have been better satisfied to have had a correct plan to make myself absolutely certain that I had caused the timbers in the lower levels to be placed in the proper position to support the undermined pillars of the upper levels, but I could not ascertain whether the engineer had rectified his survey. As regards the mine, everything seemed safe underground, but on the surface the timber of the shaft, machinery, as well as the barges, lock on the Maramarua River, &c., were getting into a very dilapidated condition. It would be well if the mine was sold, as capital is required to develop it, and put everything in working condition, which the present owners are unable to do, not having the means.

I have, &c.,

JAMES M. McLAREN,
Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.

No. 3.

ANNUAL REPORT UPON INSPECTION OF COAL MINES, SOUTH ISLAND DISTRICTS.

Mr. Inspector BINNS to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 31st January, 1881.

Section 40 of "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," enacts that "every Inspector shall, on or before the thirty-first day of January in every year, make a report in writing of his proceedings during the year ending on the next preceding thirty-first day of December, and transmit the same to the Governor." I have therefore the honor, as Inspector of Mines for the Districts of Pelorus, Kaikoura, West Wanganui, Westport, Greymouth, Jackson's Bay, Malvern, Timaru, Otago, and Southland, to make the following report of my proceedings during the year ending 31st December, 1880, for the information of His Excellency.

I have to chronicle a very large increase in the number of coal mines in this Island; not that all those now for the first time included in the list are new undertakings, but they have at least not been hitherto subject to Government supervision, and there is also a considerable number of new ventures, making a total of a hundred and one. Of this number some are now abandoned or standing; but as they have either been visited during the year, or have been working and thus contributed to the total output, they are included. Seventy-eight have been visited during the year, and the rest are either open work or on a very small scale.

My time during the year has been taken up by departmental work, with the exception of twenty-two days occupied by attendance as a witness at the Compensation Court in Dunedin, in the case *Alves v. the Corporation of Dunedin*.

On 19th July I took charge of this Island, and, as the time at my disposal from that date to the year's end was obviously very short, I thought it better to devote my attention more to the larger mines (some of which required it especially) than to the small ones, which it would have been impossible to bring under the Act at once.

I may here quote a portion of your letter, dated 16th June, 1880, in answer to mine of 14th May, asking for instructions as to enforcing the law with regard to the smaller collieries. This ran as follows: "The Inspector exercising some discretion in this matter, and reporting to this office how this discretionary power is used." Also, with reference to gold-mining, "You will not be required to inspect gold mines or to attend inquests in these cases until further instructed." I have, therefore, since that date attended no inquests on persons killed in gold mines, but have included in this report one accident which occurred on 26th February, 1880, and which is worthy of notice.

Attached is a table of statistics,* and I have to thank the managers of the various mines for sending me particulars of output, &c.; also a table of accidents, with remarks on those requiring special attention.

The law requiring the employment of certificated managers is, unfortunately, not in force in the colony. Three or four holders of certificates from the Imperial Government are engaged as managers, but I cannot see that the difficulty is at all overcome by their presence: the advantage of certified management does not lie in the fact that a man is possessed of a certificate, but that under a certain law he is registered as manager of a mine, and is *ipse facto* responsible for the care of it. While on this subject, I may call attention to the hardship under which many able men in the colony are now suffering—they have no certificates, and cannot get any, there being no Board: at the same time they

* The figures in the statistical table are up to the end of 1880, although nearer information is now to hand and some of that given was collected subsequently to sending this report in on 31st January, 1881.