

1886.

NEW ZEALAND.

INSPECTION OF MINES

(ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE INSPECTORS ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

Mr. Inspector McLAREN to the UNDER-SECRETARY OF MINES.

SIR,—

Thames, 12th June, 1886.

I have the honour to report on the coal-mines in my district for the year ending the 31st December, 1885, and, as requested by the late Under-Secretary of Mines, I bring my report up to the latest date.

The number of working mines remains the same as for last year, but the output from them steadily increases from year to year, being for 1885 111,734 tons, for 1884 103,856 tons, and for 1883 92,761 tons.

1. *Kawakawa Colliery*.—An accident occurred to this mine in the early part of the year through the collapse from the surface of one of the old workings near the outcrop. As this happened during an exceedingly heavy rainstorm and flood, the water rushed in, carrying mud and *débris* down through the levels into the shaft, choking up the pumps. They were endeavouring to draw these when I was at the mine in February last, and were ultimately successful. The water had then risen to No. 2 Level, but the works did not appear to be in any way damaged. On my last visit (1st and 2nd June) I found the workings in good order, great care being taken to prevent accident by keeping the timbers close up to the various faces. The ventilation was also good. This mine continues to be under the management of Mr. T. P. Moody. The output in 1885 was 37,172 tons, and in 1884 30,274 tons.

2. *Kamo Colliery, near Whangarei*.—On visiting this mine in February last I found it had been allowed to get into a bad state. Its condition may perhaps be best shown by the correspondence enclosed herewith. On my last visit, on Saturday, 5th instant, I found the workings very much improved in No. 2 seam, and the ventilation good; but there is far too much slack allowed to remain in the mine, which heats it very much. As, however, a patent screen is now being erected to deal with the slack, and should be shortly ready for work, the removal of all slack from the mine may soon be expected. From the fact having been proved that the seam dips away from the bottom of the shaft in a northerly direction, it is evident that to continue in this direction the shaft must be deepened and an undercut made to the coal.

3. *Whau-Whau, now called the Whangarei Mine, near Whangarei*.—On account of bringing in a branch from the Whangarei-Kamo Railway, works in this mine were stopped from January to August, 1885. When I visited it in February last the workings were all in good order, but the air was very sluggish and heavy, to which I drew attention. On my visit of the 7th instant I found a great improvement had taken place in this respect, Mr. Love, the manager, having in the meantime erected a ventilating-chimney, 50ft. high, at the mouth of the old drift at the head of the rise. Towards the north, in prospecting, the coal has been found to dip very heavily. So far as they have gone in following it, a hand-pump has been sufficient to keep the water clear, but should the coal continue to dip further, and not merely prove a heavy roll, pumping-machinery will be required.

4. *Waikato Colliery, near Huntley*.—I visited this mine last on the 29th ultimo, and found that Mr. Taylor still continues to keep it in very good order. The coal is also being taken out much more scientifically than formerly, thereby winning much larger coal; this being necessary, as the coal is of a very tender nature. The headings that were being driven last year, and were mentioned in my report for 1885, have now reached their destination. Two headings are

NOTE.—The numbers given with the mines correspond with those in Table No. 1.