

two years' experience of such work under the supervision of skilled workmen, or unless he shall have been previously employed for two years in or about the face of the workings of a mine.

No. 20. This occurred on a surface-tramway at Ferntown, about two miles from the mine. A horse fell upon Squires and injured him so much that he was not at work at the end of the year, and was not expected to resume until March. This accident was never reported, the following reason being given: The side-note to this section reads, "In case of accident in mine, manager to report to Inspector, who is to further report to Minister." Now, the manager argued, and rightly so, that the accident was not "in" the mine, so did not report at all. Perhaps to the existence of this side-note, which is entirely inaccurate, is due the fact that so few accidents are reported by the managers to the Minister.

No. 21. One of the deputies at the Greymouth-Wallsend Mine stepped on to the wrong side of a jig when the tub was running, and got somewhat bruised. Mr. Inspector Gow and I were at Greymouth at the time, and made a joint investigation, as we did also of

No. 22, which occurred three days after. In this case a piece of coal fell and cut Mason's foot.

No. 25. This was the somewhat unusual occurrence of a fatality in an open-work mine. Not that I wish by any means to record an expression of opinion that open-work mining is at all a safe method of getting coal. There is, unfortunately, a popular impression to that effect; but my belief is that if we got a large quantity of coal by open-work mining we should have many accidents. The notes of my inspection of this pit, eight months before the fatality, were—"Still open-work; nothing new to report. Cautioned Macdonald." This particular mine has always been badly worked, and the present manager appears unwilling to take warning. He will probably share his predecessor's fate.

No. 5 accident happened at the same mine. By some means a quantity of blasting-powder took fire, and Macdonald and his mate were laid up for three weeks. It was not reported.

No. 29. A. Cunningham. This took place at Kaitangata, on No. 2 incline, south side, No. 2 Colliery. I examined this place, and saw Cunningham. In my opinion the occurrence was due to his omission to secure a piece of coal. The place was severely crushed, and required extra care. The injured man assured me that he was not short of timber.

Of seventeen accidents reported to me twelve were notified in proper time, one within four days, and four not at all. Of these last, in one case the owner was in hospital; in another the owner got killed; in another the owner (who was subsequently killed) was injured; and in the last the side-note, as already explained, furnished an excuse, if not a reason, for maintaining silence.

NUMBER OF COAL-MINES.

For 1887 we had 119 mines on the list, ninety-six of which have been visited up to the 31st December. Of the remaining twenty-three, sixteen are open-work (of which eight are either new or were heard of recently for the first time), three were commenced too recently to be visited, one is closed, and the three remaining put out together 195 tons.

Fifteen mines have been struck off since last year, the Koranui being the only one of importance. Twenty-nine have been added, five of which merely resume their former places, and four now appearing for the first time have been working for a considerable period. It does not seem as if any of the new mines would be worked on a large scale, though the Hokonui may have a moderate output.

METHODS OF WORKING.

Compared with last year, the following table indicates that one shaft less is at work; that there is a reduction of one in the number of adits worked by steam-power, of two worked with horse-power, and two self-acting inclines; also that there are twelve more open-work mines.

Worked by shafts—						
Steam-power used	...	...	...	...	...	8
Horse-power	...	...	...	...	...	4
						— 12
Worked by adit—						
Engine-plane	...	...	...	...	...	9
Horse	...	...	...	...	...	9
Self-acting inclines	...	...	...	...	...	1
Hand-power	...	...	...	...	...	45
No information	...	...	...	...	...	1
						— 65
Open-work	...	...	...	...	...	42
Total	...	...	...	...	...	119

SAFETY-CAGES AND HOOKS.

Taking safety-cages first. There are now twelve mines worked by shafts, viz., Coal-pit Heath, and Greymouth-Wallsend, which had no safety-cages when I saw them; Tyneside, Saddle Hill, and Walton Park, which have other means of exit, and have been exempted; Springfield and Shag Point properly supplied; Orepuki exempted *pro tem.*, and now closed; Alexandra, Waikerikeri, and Macqueenville, where there are no cages; and Kaitangata (shaft) not used during the year. So that everything is satisfactory except the Coal-pit Heath and the Greymouth-Wallsend. The same remarks apply to most of the mines in discussing safety-hooks, except that the Greymouth-Wallsend and Coal-pit Heath have got them, and there is thus no fault to find.