

coal-mine so as to have a large output whenever required. The output of coal from this mine commenced in May last, and at the end of December last 11,800 tons were sold and delivered to consumers. Boring operations have been carried on in both the eastern and western sections of the company's property, and these proved the coal area to be considerably greater than was at first anticipated. To my mind, the area adjoining the West Bryan Mine is the section that will prove the most profitable to the company for working. Taking the cost of mining coal, railway haulage, salaries, office expenses, and all other expenses in connection with the mine, it amounted to £4,425 2s. 6d., and the sale of coal came to £4,697 17s. 6d., thus leaving a balance to the credit of the company of £272 15s. on the working of the mine during the first eight months.

Adjoining the Hikurangi Mine is what is termed the West Bryan, which is leased from the person owning the freehold. A considerable area of coal has been cut up into pillars, but the very small depth of cover will make it difficult to get the whole of the coal in these pillars now on the end of the ground next the swamp; the lessee is stripping the surface in order to get the whole of the coal, but this stripping will cost a considerable amount. In some of the places the coal is soft, but on the northern boundary there seems to be a very good class of coal.

Another new mine was opened out here last year by Mathews and party, but at the time of my visit no coal had been taken out of the mine; they were then laying down a light iron tramway from the mine to the railway; this mine is leased from Mr. Carter.

NGUNGURU.

This field contains a good quality of coal, the best that has yet been found in the North Island, at the same time it is inferior to the bituminous coal on the West Coast, and the coal-bearing area is greatly circumscribed. A large output can never be expected, as the harbour is only suitable for light-draught vessels.

Another coal-lease has been taken up on the opposite side of the river from the other mine, and a considerable amount of prospecting has been done, but only in certain places was a workable seam found.

WAIKATO.

There has been a considerable output from these mines last year, but the class of coal in this district is only suitable for local consumption. The mines in this district are the Waikato, Taupiri Extended, and Taupiri Reserve, whose output was 11,278 tons, 30,426 tons, and 13,877 tons respectively, making the total output for this locality for the last year 55,581 tons. There is a great thickness of coal in some of these mines, and, no doubt, when once there is direct communication with the Thames Valley by railway the output from the mines in this locality will be greatly increased, for, although the coal is inferior to that in the mines further north, it will be landed at such a price that mining companies can afford to use a larger quantity of this class of coal, which probably will make it more economical than using a better class at a higher rate.

MIDDLE ISLAND.

COLLINGWOOD.

One coal-mine has been worked here for many years, but owing to the thinness of the seams, the faults and breaks met with at different times, and also that only very small vessels can get to Ferntown, where the coal is shipped, the mine has not, therefore, proved a payable venture. There are other areas of coal in this neighbourhood and in the same range, but no large output could ever be expected from any mine on this field. In the event of the Parapara iron deposit being utilised, then the coal here would be a valuable adjunct to any company erecting large works for the manufacture of iron, but even then a railway would have to be constructed from the mine to Parapara, which would be a distance of at least four miles.

Recently, Mr. N. D. Cochrane, the Inspector of Mines for the West Coast, made a special examination of the Collingwood Mine, and reported on the proposals of Mr. Walker, the manager, for the further development of the mine, of which the following is an extract:—

"The mine is worked from one adit running west, which pierces the hill at a height of some 860ft. above the flat, and crosscuts the strata which dips to the west and north-west. The angle of the dip is at first, say, 1 in 3, but when followed in the mine flattens out to 1 in 8, and this general inclination to the west or north-west is continued for a considerable distance, probably right through the range to the coast. Five seams of coal have been worked, some of which are at places parted by a band of stone; but these seams are all very thin. When the mine was inspected, on the 5th June last, three men were working in the top or No. 1 seam to west of the jig, and the section was 4in. coal, 6in. stone, 12in. coal, then mudstone floor. Three men were also working in the same seam to the north of the main tunnel, where the upper part had pinched out, but the lower division was 18in. in thickness. In No. 2 seam three men were working near the outcrop on coal 2ft. 6in. thick. All these thicknesses are considered fair and workable, indeed, rather better than usual, but the areas will not last any time.

"The reasons for the workings being discontinued in the various seams are given by Mr. Walker as under:—

"No. 1 seam, to the farthest north, was thin and steep.

"No. 2 seam was stony in the northern workings, and to the south ran into shale.

"No. 3 was only worked as a makeshift when the coal in the others had given out.

"Nos. 4 and 5 were met by a fault and shaly coal.

"All the seams are limited to the east by the outcrop, and to the west or dip by the water,