

engine-room bar grating, deck-ladder; eleven wire-rope stays, 30 ft.; topmast, 25 ft.; rails, two pair truck-wheels, and sundries now lying on the beach.

Lot 4.—One chain cable and anchor, two pieces chain cable, three davits, and four davit-sockets, all now lying on beach at Mokihinui. Also, a lot of chains, blocks, cables, timber, old iron, and sundries, now stored in shed at Corby's, but not including any articles stored therein connected with the marine engines.

Lot 5.—About 150 tons of coal, more or less, now lying on the property.

Over £40,000 has been spent on plant and developments, and all the machinery required for working the mine is now on the ground, and any purchaser can set to work at once and win coal, of which there is plenty in sight.

Complete schedules and any further particulars can be inspected at the *Westport Times* office, Westport; the office of the liquidators, 84, Lambton Quay, Wellington; Messrs. Stout and Findlay, barristers, Lambton Quay, Wellington; or the auctioneers.

INTERIM REPORT ON THE LIQUIDATION OF THE MOKIHINUI COAL COMPANY (LIMITED).

I HANDED over the charge of the mine to Mr. Robert Tennant, Government Inspector of Mines, on the 21st February, on which date the mine was free from water, and everything in good order. On the 1st November I had a new splice put in the wire rope that drives the pump—about 40 ft.—where it was weak, and it ought now to stand for a considerable time. I had all the mine-tubs tarred and put in order, the plant gathered up, and, when necessary, placed under cover.

Hut Seam.—I had samples of coal taken from this portion of the mine, and conveyed here in sacks. The coal stood the handling well. Although a little soft, it is a first-class household coal. The small coal cakes readily, and burns well in an open grate. With a view to the future working of this part of the property, I have gone over a large portion of the level country (to the east of the drive) which appears sound, and I firmly believe contains a large field of hard coal, which I think could be easily worked, and the main drive constructed to do away with the pumping, and on a grade to win the coals without the expense of steam-haulage. With this end in view, I strongly recommend the prospecting of this part of the property by boring, which I think could be carried out at a cost less than £250. As showing the haphazard way in which work was done, there were no bores put down, or prospecting of any kind done before the drive was put in, hence the need for pumping and steam-haulage at this working, which ran into a fault, and caused work to be stopped. Pending further prospecting I would keep the old workings free from water, as at present. I would also recommend that the drive should be carried in a few chains with a view to going through the fault, or a line of bores put down, starting from the end of the drive, which would prove the ground. I am of opinion that coal will be found at a deeper level on the other side of the fault, and will improve in quality and hardness as it advances to the level country.

Big Seam.—This is just the same as when I took charge. I am of opinion that the fire is still burning in this portion of the mine, and steps should be taken at once to locate it, and if possible have it extinguished if still alight, and the old workings examined, as any good coal discovered towards the Cardiff Company's property would, I think, have to be worked through them, and thereby save cost of constructing a fresh drive and new line of tramway. The Cardiff is working good hard coal towards the Mokihinui lease to the south-west, and which I think will prove to run into the Mokihinui lease at the back. So far the coal worked in this part of the mine has proved to be too soft for household purposes, which is the class of coal most in demand. Steam-ing-coal is not easily disposed of, as there are large quantities put out from Denniston, Granity Creek, and Cardiff Mines.

Top Mine.—This is useless, and the plant should be at once withdrawn and the working closed up. The tunnel leading to this mine is in a dangerous state, and may collapse at any time, which would mean leaving the plant where it is, as it would not pay to take it down the creek or over the hill. The cost of winning coal, and delivering the same at ships' side, Westport, would be much less than at any of the other mines, as there are no engineering difficulties to contend with. The coal could be delivered at the staiths, Mokihinui, on the incline principle on a very easy grade, and almost self-working, merely requiring the services of a man to regulate the speed and stop the rope when necessary, which cannot be done elsewhere. For good screened household coal, delivered on board ship, Westport, 8s. per ton would leave a good profit over working-expenses; steam-coal, less—say, 7s.; and with low freight to Wellington and other ports the high price of coal now ruling would be a thing of the past. In conveying coals in sacks, for sample purposes, in lots of one ton or over, the Union Company charge the high price of 12s. 6d. per ton, showing that they must have a large profit, and prohibit people from getting coal otherwise than through retail dealers. The Westport Coal Company are now running depots of their own in the chief towns, and selling direct to the consumers; but their retail price is the same as that charged by dealers (or middlemen), thereby giving no inducement to the consumer to buy direct, and thus do away with the middlemen and lower prices.

I would strongly urge the Government, if they desire to get back from the mine the moneys owing to them, to carry out the following measure: thoroughly prospect the mine as suggested, at a cost of from £250 to £500. Unless this is done the mine must be abandoned and the whole expenditure incurred—over £40,000—absolutely thrown away. For a further £500 the Government can thoroughly prove the mine, and, if successful, sell it for from £5,000 to £10,000. If unsuccessful, the £500 would be well spent in saving a further wasteful expenditure of capital on the part of any hopeful but ignorant speculator or syndicate who might take it up.

Wellington, April, 1899.

W. SIMPSON,
Liquidator, Mokihinui C.C.