

Department of Lands and Survey, District Office, Nelson, 2nd May, 1899.

(Memorandum.)

Arrears of Rent, Mokihinui Coal Leases.—In reply to your memorandum of the 26th ultimo, No. 38272, as far as I am aware every effort has been made to get payment from the company, which has gone into liquidation and become defunct. Repeated claims were made by this office, especially so on your memorandum of the 28th March, 1898, when it was put in the hands of the Crown Solicitor. Subsequently, on the strength of your telegram of the 10th May following, the Crown Solicitor was requested to send all papers in connection with the case to the Crown Law Officer. The case was then placed in the hands of Messrs. Stout and Findlay, who filed a petition in the Supreme Court. The outcome of these proceedings was that an official liquidator was appointed, at whose request I furnished statements of royalty, &c.; but from that time until now I have heard nothing of the case excepting through the newspapers, from which I learned that the Government had purchased the lease and property.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

THOS. HUMPHRIES,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

(Memorandum.)

Wellington, 13th May, 1899.

Arrears of Rent, Mokihinui Coal Company.—When the winding-up of the company is finished there will be a sum to be handed over to the Government, but I am unable to say what the amount will be until all calls are recovered and the winding-up costs paid. It will be advisable for you to keep your books open until the final winding-up of the company, of which you will get due notice.

W. H. SIMPSON, Liquidator,
Mokihinui Coal Company (Limited), in Liquidation.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines' Office, Westport, 15th May, 1899.

Mokihinui Coal-mine.—In compliance with your instructions dated the 5th April last, in which I was directed to visit the mine and furnish a full report on its present condition, together with my opinion as to the best means of working it in future, I have made several examinations of the workings, and have the honour to submit the following report :—

During the period this coal-mining property was held and worked as a colliery under the title of the Mokihinui Coal Company the coal won has been mined from three separate districts—namely, the Big Seam Mine, Upper Mine, and Hut Seam Mine.

Big Seam Mine.—This section of the mining lease rises in a terrace situated on the north bank of Coal Creek, and which has formed the chief centre of mining operations. Forming the entrance to the mine, the coal is cut down in a square face on the hill-side to a depth of 30 ft., and the sides are built up with an extensive series of crib-logging. From this face two adits pierce the coal, one on the bottom of the coal-seam, and the other near the top. As regards the exploration of this district of workings information is very limited, from the fact that about 80 yards in the top adit the whole district is blocked by stoppings, which were built to prevent the spread of a gob-fire which extends over a large area of old workings. Indications of this fire still exist, as heat is readily felt on the roof along the top of the stoppings. A fresh outbreak only awaits the removal of these stoppings to admit free ventilation. Referring to the character and quality of the coal as a marketable product, it compares very unfavourably either with Westport-Cardiff or Westport Coal Company's coal. This deterioration is entirely due to the geological conditions of the coalfield, for overlying the highly bituminous coals of Westport and Brunner is a series of hard sandstone grits, while the Mokihinui coal measures underlie a series of soft marls. This stratigraphical change in the coal formations classifies the Mokihinui coal as a semi-bituminous or glance coal.

Upper Mine.—This section of the coal lease is a continuation of the Big Seam that underlies an extensive flat, which is intersected with gullies and small creek-beds, and for a considerable area may be considered coal-bearing. From information received, these gullies are cut down through the shallow roof-cover, and form deposits of clay in the coal (as shown on the plan). The heading that is driven from the Big Seam Mine, which shows to be nearly connected with the upper district of workings, is cut in a mountain-ridge that connects the two sections of the coal-field. On the eastern slope of this ridge the coal is wholly displaced by denudation for a distance of 10 chains. I may here state that at the time this cut-off was discovered in the workings, that the indications were considered favourable to a downthrow displacement. Such is not the case, because all the evidence goes to prove, as stated above, that this displacement is due to denudation. Entering the terrace by the upper adit-tunnel, the first chain-length is driven through broken marl and clay, and where the outcrop is cut the quality seems fairly good, but deteriorates as the workings proceed. This characteristic of outcrop coal is shown in other sections, and very particularly at the entrance of the Hut Seam. Continuing on the main adit, the heavy timber is broken down just inside the main rise-heading, caused by an extensive fall of roof that can be traced on the surface, by which all possible ingress to the lower workings is cut off. Following the rise-heading to the top of the third "gig" another fall is met that gives indication of the surface being broken. As far as can be travelled behind this fall for foul air (Co), the coal is giving signs of pinching out towards the mountain-ridge westward. During heavy rains the roadways are liable to be covered with large deposits of silt that is brought down from these falls by large inflows of water from the surface. The tunnel section of the tramway—that is, the division from the north bank of the creek through the Big Seam mine-workings—is in good condition, with the exception of a few sets near the upper end, where the gob-fire crosses underneath the timber. The bridge