

The Knights of Labour then proceeded with some new work—viz., the opening of a new portion of the lease. A drive running north and south was put through a spur 10 chains in length. Eight chains of open incline was then formed, and a drive into the terrace cut the coal after a few yards' driving. The coal obtained in this portion, contrary to expectation, turned out very inferior. After putting a good many places off the main heading a prospecting-drive was turned off towards the south-west heading. After driving in this direction a long distance it was finally stopped, as nothing was obtained but dirty soft coal.

Attention was then turned towards the portion known as the Hut Seam. A drive had been made some time previously in this outcrop, going east; but after driving for about 5 chains had for some reason been stopped. This drive is dipping about 1 in 7, and it had been allowed to fill with water. After getting the water out a back-air drive was started and kept running parallel with the main heading. Great quantities of stone were met with, and had to be driven through. The main heading seemed to be in trouble nearly all the time, some days giving indications of a change for the better, and then going back. After driving on a level for about 2 chains a downthrow appeared. This was followed down, and a change came apparently of a flat or rise, when an inbreak of water came through the bottom, and quickly filled the dip to the flat above; the pump situated here coped with the water until another pump was placed, which speedily drained the mine. After getting to the heading face-driving was again proceeded with, and the seam was found to be going level again, but the coal was unmarketable, being very dirty. After driving about 2 chains on this level a prospecting-drive was put in to the right, and after 3 yards got a face of nice hard coal, but, the roof dipping and gas showing, it was stopped.

The main heading was then gone on with, but the coal met in the prospecting-drive did not appear for a good distance. It was reached at last, but after following it a short distance it was found to be dipping to the east. A seam of good coal was found to be coming in overhead, so to catch it the heading was driven level, and the main seam went underneath. Upon breaking the top seam it was found to be good coal, but unfortunately it was also dipping to the east. Having no appliances to work the dip advantageously, and expecting a rise of country, I turned off to the right of the heading, and as it went in the roof began to take a rise. I soon had 3 ft. of good coal, but on the day of stopping the mine a downthrow of about 1 ft. 6 in. came in. There is no change visible in the grade of the bottom, by which I think it is simply a roll, and will ultimately return to its original height. The coal generally obtained from the Hut Seam was of a thin cleat, and, after exposure to the atmosphere, very friable. But since going further ahead in the mine to the right the coal is more solid and not so friable.

Prior to Mr. Alexander taking charge of your mine, a large amount of work had been done under the direction of Mr. Straw. The heading described as the south-west heading was driven by him from the outside. Of the quality of the coal obtained there is no record at the mine, but judging from the sides of the drive the coal would be of fair quality. A dip going westerly had been driven by him, and to judge from appearances four distinct faults were met running at right angles across the said dip. At the bottom of the dip a level seam was found showing a nice face of coal, but, after driving a short distance in it, for some reason it had been stopped. The return air was conveyed through this dip, and up by an undercast under the main heading, which was the intake.

After the fire broke out in the Lawrence Section, and tight stoppings were put in to stop the air from reaching the site of the fire, it became unnecessary to employ a man to keep the dip dry, so it was allowed to be filled up. An outbreak of fire was reported shortly after in another part of the mine to the right of the main heading, so it was necessary to put a tight stopping across the main heading to exclude the air.

DEAR SIR,—

Wakamarina Gorge, 5th May, 1897.

I received your letter yesterday afternoon, and I am losing no time in answering the same: it gives me great pleasure in doing so.

I will give all the information I possibly can, not now, but at any time. I say, without exaggeration, that I know the Mokihinui Company's property in a practical way as well as any one that ever was on it. I have been on the coalfields of the West Coast, New Zealand, for the last twenty-seven years; I have been eighteen years connected with management of mines; I was twelve months prospecting for coal for different companies: the rest of my time I was mining with the pick—I rose from the pick. I sunk the Wallsend first deep shaft, 675 ft., on contract. This gave a good insight into the different coal-measures I passed through, as I have always taken a note of all measures I have come in contact with. I am not writing on thought, but on practice; therefore I have not the least hesitation in saying that the Mokihinui Coal Company's property is one of the finest properties on the West Coast. Although I failed to carry it through, if I had had £3,000 and boats to take away the coal I think I could have made it the best-paying mine on the Coast. The lease commands a large amount of unbroken country to the South Hut Seam—I should say, three miles long by about one mile wide—and no one can command the ground at the back of the company's lease without large outlay, such as £40,000, in order to construct a road to it, where the Mokihinui Company would be making a road to it all the time through coal—and, I believe, through the best class of coal that is around Westport, as the lower seam is a different class of coal altogether than the top coal; I was sorry I did not get a trial of some at the gasworks before I stopped, as I know it is good gas or coking coal.

*Native Reserve.*—I do not think so much of that part as I did. There is not much ground altogether, and I do not know if it would pay to lay out the amount of capital it would take to take the coal out, as your Hut Seam is right over against the county road, or within about 2 chains of it; therefore, about 40 or 50 acres is as much as there will be of it of high-land drainage-fall, and there would be a deal of water to contend with. There would have to be a shaft put