

No. 3.

Mr. ROBERT TENNENT, Inspector of Mines, Westport, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines' Office, Westport, 21st March, 1904.

I have the honour, in compliance with section 67 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891," to report as follows on the West Coast coal-mines for the year ending 31st December, 1903:—

Enner Glynn Coal-mine.—Mr. Gimett has sunk a shaft to the depth of 180 ft. in the vicinity of the old mine, but when lately visited operations were suspended pending the raising of further capital.

Prospecting at Belgrove.—Mr. Morrison, landowner, was driving a low level in his spare time, but the prospects so far attained cannot be regarded as promising.

Motupipi Coal-mine.—There was nothing done at this mine during the year.

Shakespeare Bay.—Further prospecting in this locality is abandoned at present.

Taitapu.—Mr. N. L. Buchanan, attorney for the Taitapu Gold Estates (Limited), is awaiting instructions from the London office before commencing to extend development further.

Pakawau Coal-mine.—(11/9/1903): With the exception that a general survey of the property is being made by Mr. James Bishop, to locate a low level through Mr. Shaw's land in order to attain more favourable loading facilities at deep water, all works are suspended.

Puponga Coal-mine (owners, Puponga Coal- and Gold-mining Company (Limited); Mr. Sydney George Hayward, attorney for the company).—(12/9/1903): As stated in my report of last year, Mr. James Bishop, consulting engineer and acting-manager for the company, had drafted plans and estimates for the construction of haulage tram-line and loading-jetty. These works are now in a forward state, and the management anticipate that shipment of coal will commence in April next. The 2 ft. gauge tram-line, fitted for locomotive power, gravitates slightly in favour of the load, with a measured length of one mile and a half, while the jetty extension gives an additional 39 chains. Storage-capacity is being amply provided to facilitate loading and enable ships to be despatched with a minimum loss of time. The maximum depth of water at the jetty at high spring tides is about 14 ft. With reference to the mine-developments, the aggregate cutting and drivings amounts to 2,000 ft., of which 96 ft. is driven dipwards from the low level. The general haulage of the mine will be controlled by a steam-driven 20-horse-power engine suitably placed on the surface, the fittings for which are now nearing completion. Storage-bins, screens, and picking-belts are in course of construction, but slackness in the forwarding of material is a source of delay much felt. The underground developments are securely timbered and well ventilated. There are thirty-five men employed on the works.

Mokihinui Coal-mine.—(21/12/1903): The co-operative party working this mine has opened a new section of working adjoining the western boundary of the Seddonville Colliery (New Zealand State Coal-mines). Development so far as extended has been chiefly of a prospecting character; the thickness and quality of coal-seam being features not according to anticipations. A rock tunnel, 9 ft. by 6 ft. in the clear, recently started from near the landing of the main surface incline, is rising on an easy gradient to tap the rise level at a calculated distance of 6 chains. When completed, a direct intake and haulage-way will be provided to win the rise coal. Timbering has been made a speciality, and ventilation is well maintained from the openings made on the outcrops. Reports are kept to date, while ropes and all working-material are kept in good order and condition.

The only change noticeable in the burning mine is that smoke is now rising from the north end of Knight's heading, where the original fire broke out.

Seddonville Colliery (New Zealand State Coal-mines—Thomas Murray, mine-manager).—(21/12/1903): The varied works relative to the operative development of this colliery have been actively pushed. In conjunction with, and to further hasten completion of, the rock-driven adit tunnel, a securely timbered ventilation-shaft, 12 ft. by 8 ft. in the clear, was sunk on the 22-chain peg to a depth of 149 ft., from whence a level rock crosscut was driven westward to connect and open out two faces on the line (previously determined) to hole the adit. This work was most efficiently carried out, and reflects great credit on the skill of the local engineer. The necessary connections with the shaft having been successfully completed, to insure free ventilating-currents two parallel winning-levels were driven westward, between two fault-lines, from the face of the adit tunnel in the direction of Borehole Creek. This development has now attained considerable dimensions, and is capable of maintaining a fair output, while further extension of the rock tunnel is operative towards Grant's Face district. Haulage is effected by a steam-driven endless-rope installation, working direct from the adit terminal to the storage-bins. The completed distance is 111 chains on varied grades, which effect a total vertical fall of 454 ft. from the mouth of the adit. The storage-bins have a capacity of 900 tons, and are suitably worked by travelling tipplers, which are singularly suited to minimise the breakage of coal. Loading facilities have also received attention by the construction of a loop-line forming a back shunt for the supply of empty wagons to the bins to replace those loaded as they are shunted out to the railway siding. Stability is the general feature observed in the completed works, while the timbering and line of the rock tunnel represent excellent samples of engineering ability and skilled workmanship. Ventilation is temporarily maintained by a powerful steam-jet pending fan-installation. Reports and other provisions of the Act are strictly observed. A labourer named John Edgar was accidentally killed by falling from a beam while the storage-bins were under construction.

Millerton Colliery (owners, Westport Coal Company; George Fletcher, mining manager).—(21/12/1903): Double shifting continues to be actively maintained, while the output of 313,584 tons, of which 6,005 tons were used at the colliery for steaming purposes, shows an increase of 36,834 tons as compared with the preceding year. Efficiency in general working-