

## ANNEXURE A.

## REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF MINES.

Mr. BOYD BENNIE, Inspector of Mines, Thames, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines' Office, Thames, 27th February, 1909.

In compliance with section 78 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1908," I have the honour to report on the coal-mines in the Northern District for the year ended 31st December, 1908.

*Kawakawa Mine* (Samuel Neill, mine-manager).—Operations have been confined to the outcrop section of the property, formerly worked by the Bay of Islands Coal Company. Some pillars have been located and extracted; but the result has been disappointing, and not as remunerative as was expected. The quality of the coal is constantly deteriorating, owing to atmospheric influences. Late in the year attention was directed to what is known as Moody's outcrops, and some large pillars were located; but, owing to the necessity of relaying rails and repairing the old line, it is doubtful whether the place can be profitably worked. I inspected the operations during the year, and found that the work was being carefully carried out. The output for the year was 980 tons of coal. It is to be regretted that no company has been found to undertake the systematic prospecting of the Kawakawa property to the south-west section, and also the prospecting of the land extending along the Hikurangi-Kawakawa Railway route, where the prospects are favourable.

*Kitinikau Syndicate*.—Early in the year this syndicate acquired the old Whau mining property, and commenced prospecting on the outcrop of the coal-seam in the vicinity of the old colliery. Several prospecting drives were put in, and the coal was discovered to be both deteriorated and thin. It is stated that there is yet a large area of coal unworked lying between the mine and the old Kamo Mines. To work the property profitably it should be opened up from the Kamo end, where the coal is some depth below the surface. The mine-workings were examined, and found to be in good order. Five hundred tons of coal was mined for the year. Two men were employed.

*Hikurangi Coal Company (Limited)* (W. R. Dunn, manager).—Mining operations have principally consisted of the extraction of pillar-coal in the eastern section. The pillar-coal on the western side of the Government railway, and underlying the limestone rocks, is now exhausted. To prevent the flooding of this section a strong dam has been made in the drive through the railway pillar. East of the railway pillar there is yet some good coal to be got, and it is here that operations are being conducted. The new area, west of the railway, referred to in last annual report, has been opened up well, and at least half the number of the company's men are employed here. It is estimated that there are approximately 60,000 tons of coal that can be extracted from the pillars. The company has also acquired what appears to be a valuable property south-west of the Hikurangi Township and close to the railway. Boreholes were put down to a depth of from 200 ft. to 500 ft., and a seam 10 ft. thick discovered. This is an important discovery, as it proves the coalfield to be more extensive than was at first supposed. I inspected the mine twice during the year, and found everything satisfactory. The company's output for the year was 61,071 tons of coal; and dividends amounted to £1,875 (including a bonus of £750). Seventy-four men were employed.

*Northern Coal Company (Limited)* (William Morgan, manager).—From the north side of the main adit level coal was won from bords in the solid, and also from pillars. To the south side of the main level the work was confined to extracting pillar-coal. Great care should be exercised in this undertaking, otherwise a large quantity of coal will be lost. Through a subsidence among the pillars, the air-shaft and airways were interrupted, and at the time of my visit the ventilation was poor. The manager is taking active measures to restore ventilation by opening up the airways. A new tunnel is being driven north of the present drive, and this will open up some coal to the dip of the present workings, as well as provide for drainage and the material improvement of ventilation. The prospects disclosed in this section are very encouraging. The output for the year reached 50,275 tons of coal, being an increase of 1,727 tons over the previous year. £3,000 was paid in dividends, and seventy-four men employed.

*Kiripaka Mine* (Northern Coal Company, owners; E. W. Tattley, mine-manager).—Operations have been confined to the sections north and south of the main dip haulage-way. The mine is just opening out, consequently no pillar-coal has yet been worked. The main dip has not been extended for the year, there being sufficient coal for present requirements. The coal is of a hard nature, and requires much blasting. In the workings north and south of the main dip the coal-seam has thinned considerably. This is characteristic of the northern coalfields. As previously stated, the property has been well prospected by surface boreholes. The output for the year was 34,579 tons of coal, being an increase of 2,000 tons over last year. In addition to this, 2,887 tons of fireclay was mined. Sixty-eight men were employed.

*Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited)*, Ralph's Section (E. S. Wight, manager).—During the year the company purchased the Taupiri West Company's property, which adjoins their western area. A pair of headings was at once started from the main south-west dip haulage-road with a view to connecting with the Taupiri West shaft. Such a connection is highly desirable, as it will provide an outlet on the western side of the Waikato River for use in case of emergency. This connection cannot, however,