

ANNEXURE A.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF MINES.

NORTHERN INSPECTORATE: MR. BOYD BENNIE.

Hikurangi Coal Company (Limited).—No. 3 section (new dip): From this section the greater portion of the annual output has been produced. The work has been confined chiefly to pillar-extraction from under the limestone area, where the coal-seam averages in thickness about 11 ft. In the North-east section a new dip is being driven into a small area of coal.

No. 4 section (Crown lease): Upon this lease boring for coal is being carried out adjacent to the limestone rocks to the dip of the No. 3 section. The mine roads and working-places are in fair order, but the ventilation has been neglected. A small Waddel ventilating-fan has been installed, and on my visits of inspection of the 19th July and 23rd July last it was stopped, and the air in the mine was inadequate both in quality and quantity. For this neglect the manager was prosecuted for a breach of the Coal-mines Act, 1908, section 40 (1), and was fined and ordered to pay costs. The coal mined for the year was 54,618 tons, as against 64,657 tons for the previous year, showing a decrease of 10,039 tons. An average of eighty-five men were employed.

Northern Coal Company (Limited).—Hikurangi Northern Mine: This section is approaching exhaustion, work being almost exclusively confined to pillar-extraction. A considerable area of pillars remains intact, but owing to thin bands of stone in the seam a great number of the pillars will be left in as unprofitable. The roads, working-places, and ventilation I found satisfactory. The quantity of coal mined for the year was 43,436 tons, while the amount extracted in the previous year was 40,503 tons, an increase of 2,933 tons. The number of men employed in and about the mine was seventy-one.

The Kiripaka-Panapu section is exhausted, and the machinery is being removed. On the 14th September I visited the mine and found the main drive closed, and I was informed by the manager that a few days previously the last of the pillar coal had been extracted, and the roof allowed to fall. The percentage of coal lost was very small. The whole of the pillars were drawn without any serious accident. Most of the machinery at this mine will be used at the new section, Te Kiripaka Block, situated about two miles distant from the Panapu. For the year 12,341 tons of coal were mined and shipped. An average of thirty men were employed.

Te Kiripaka Mine is a new section now being developed. It is situated about two miles from the Panapu section.

Hikurangi Waro Mine: This is a new mine in course of development by the Northern Coal Company, and is situated about half a mile north of the Hikurangi Township, and close to the well-known limestone rocks at Waro. The company has prospected, by boring, a large area lying between the Main North Road and the Hikurangi Mountain, and it is reported that at various depths a coal-seam averaging 11 ft. in thickness was proved. About 200 acres has been prospected in this manner. The development of this colliery was commenced early in the year. The main incline shaft, dipping 1 in 3, in stone, is expected to cut into the coal at a depth of 650 ft. An upcast air-shaft has been sunk a depth of 195 ft. to the coal-seam. An air-compressor, with a blast fan, has been erected for temporary ventilation, and the main ventilating-fan (of Waddel type) is in course of erection at the upcast shaft. The mine is to be connected with the Government railway-line by about half a mile of branch line. I examined the mine-workings several times during the year, and found them in good order. A comfortable change-room is erected for the men, and adequate workshops and office accommodation are provided. There is an average of forty-nine men employed.

Ruatangata Kamo Colliery.—This small colliery, which had been closed down for a time, was reopened early in the year, but only a small quantity of coal was produced. Unfortunately, the workings had come into close proximity to the abandoned workings of the old Kamo Colliery, with the result that the mine became irretrievably flooded, and is now abandoned. For the year 110 tons of coal was mined, giving employment to nine men.

Whangarei-Kamo Colliery.—The mine-developments being extended in the main dip eastwards proved the coal to be much broken and displaced by faulting; and it now appears that the only hope of entering an area of good coal, comparatively free of faults, is to extend the main dip towards the old Kamo Colliery, where it is said a workable seam was left by the Kamo Company, who ceased operations many years ago owing to a mine-fire. The Whangarei Colliery has worked almost continuously throughout the year. For the year 5,405 tons of coal were raised. An average of twenty-one men were employed. During the year I examined the mine on several occasions, and found the roads and working-places in good order. The natural ventilation of the mine by two shafts is not satisfactory, and a fan is required.

United Colliery.—As stated in my previous report, this mine was closed for a time, but it was reopened early in the year by new owners, and with a limited number of miners the return shows an output of 5,230 tons. Several extensive surface alterations are being made. The output of coal is transported by barges down Miranda Creek to the Main Trunk Railway near Mercer. I found the mine in good order. Ventilation was fair, and it is proposed to install a ventilating-fan. An average of forty-six men have been employed.

Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited).—Ralph's Mine: The output of coal for the year at this mine was 115,235 tons, as compared with 108,741 tons during 1911, an increase of 6,512 tons. The number