

ANNEXURE A.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF MINES.

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. BOYD BENNIE, Inspector.)

Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited), Extended Colliery.—The present mine-workings are located in the north-west and south-west dip sections. In the north-west section, No. 6 level, south-east, a mine-creep was observed early in the year; the base of the coal-pillars were crushing and the floor heaving. Towards the end of the year the pillar-sides and the drives were being crushed to such a degree that mining there was suspended. The affected section is some chains west of the Waikato River, and where the cover is 450 ft. The area affected is small.

The concrete dams, built last year, have been closed, but the water behind the dams is allowed to drain through them by means of pipes. The mine, generally speaking, is in a good condition, ventilation being good. The company's official examiners report that small quantities of gas have been seen on several occasions in the present and old workings, mostly due to interruption of the ventilation by breaking down of the brattice-cloth. Some improvements have been made in the haulage gradients during the year.

Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited), Awaroa Colliery.—This new colliery is six miles south-west of Huntly, on the Huntly-Pukemiro Railway line; 60 chains of private line connect the Government railway to the mine. The coal-seam is entered by a short adit; the coal is hard and of good quality. The seam 17 ft. thick, dipping south-east, 1 in 10. The drainage will be light. Several valleys intersect the field, where the coal has been denuded, yet there appears to be an extensive field of coal available.

The screening and haulage plants are being erected, most of the machinery being that which was used at the company's Ralph's Mine, now closed.

A sirocco fan is to be erected at the mine, with a capacity of 60,000 to 70,000 cubic feet per minute. Steam power will be used.

Pukemiro Colliery.—An extensive area of good coal in sight. The field is intersected by two faults; that to the right of the haulage-road is 90 ft. of an upthrow, and the one to the left 80 ft. of a downthrow. The faults are approximately 25 chains apart and bearing north-east and south-west. Between these fault-lines are the present workings. A tunnel has been driven through the floor-rock of the coal beyond the fault to the right and into the coal, where the development drives are being driven.

The mine has been examined regularly by me, and also by the workmen's inspectors, and found to be in a safe state. There has been no addition to the mining plant during the year, only the main haulage-rope has been extended farther into the mine.

The thickness of the seam is approximately 20 ft., bords being worked 14 ft. wide and 16 ft. high, with 8-yard pillars.

Waipa Colliery.—At the Nos. 1 and 2 sections the first working has been completed to the upthrow fault, and a considerable portion of the pillar coal worked. No. 1 section is almost exhausted, only a few pillars being left. A fire occurred in that area, and it is now sealed off from No. 2 section.

At No. 2 level there is extensive crushing of the pillar coal, in places the floor rising to the top of the drives; there remains, however, a considerable quantity of coal there to be won.

No. 3 section, beyond the upthrow fault, is closed for the time being, owing to a collapse of the main heading through defective timbering.

In No. 4 section, west of the No. 2 section and beyond the big upthrow fault, there are a number of miners at work. The coal is hard and of a good quality, the seam being from 8 ft. to 10 ft. thick.

The ventilation is by two sirocco fans, and is adequate and satisfactory. I visited the mine approximately once a month.

The company, without authority, mined under a public road to such an extent as to cause subsidence. For this the Crown received compensation from the company.

Huntly Coal and Fireclay Mining Company.—The mine is being worked by opencast, the cover overlaying the coal being approximately 8 ft. thick, of poor fireclay. All coal mined is used at the company's brick and tile kilns. The fireclay-quarry is adjacent to the coal-mine, and is the foot-wall fireclay. Both the mine and quarry are carefully worked.

Waikato Extended.—Early in the year the mine became the property of the Waikato Steam Navigation Company. Since then a new wharf has been built and a new ground tram formed to the mine.

The mine has not been energetically worked. The coal is taken in barges over the Waikato River to settlers, butter-factories, &c., but the directors of the company have been lax in providing sufficient barges and temporary storage for coal, and unless a more vigorous policy is pursued the mine must ultimately be closed. I examined the mine several times during the year and found it safe. Ventilation by natural means good.