

ANNEXURE A.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF MINES.

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

Hikurangi Colliery.—This colliery has been working for twenty-eight years, and the present mines are nearing exhaustion. The pillar coal is being worked in all sections, which will not last a year. Several bores have been sunk on the company's property near the present mines, and it is stated that coal has been got in almost every hole. I understand that in the near future the work of opening a new colliery will be undertaken. It is hoped that the company will install a more up-to-date ventilating-fan at the proposed colliery. That now in use at the mines is small and of Waddle type; it never was satisfactory. I examined the mines frequently during the year.

The Northern Coal Company's mine at Waro has been closed during the war, owing to the owners being unable to procure suitable machinery to deal with the haulage, pumping, and ventilation of the mine. An obsolete steam plant was previously in use, and owing to the uneven nature of the coal-seam, numerous pumps and haulage winches were required. Early in the year the owners purchased an electrical plant in Australia, and this plant is now being erected to reopen the mine and work it under improved conditions. Recently this colliery has been sold to the Wilson's Portland Cement Company. The erecting of the electrical plant is now nearing completion, and a mine-manager having been appointed, the unwatering and reopening-up of the mine will be undertaken.

Northern Collieries (Tauranga Section).—This small mine is on a portion of the Northern Company's property, and is let on tribute to a party of miners. The company could not work the mine on award rates. The coal-seam is thin and intersected by a clay band. The mine was examined a number of times by me during the year.

Kerr and Co.'s Waro Mine (McLeod's Freehold).—This mine was recently opened by a party of miners on the co-operative principle. The mine was worked some years ago, and it is believed that there are some small pillars of coal left. Another portion to be worked lies north-west of the north road, several bores having been drilled and coal located. To work that coal a dip tunnel is being driven from the old mine adit-level. That coal below a number of miners' cottages will not be worked for some time, but when that coal is worked the cottages referred to will have to be removed.

Kerr and Wyatt's Crown Lease (Section 39, Block XVI, Hikurangi Survey District).—This mine has been worked for five years, and the coal mined with great care. Altogether there have been 21,594 tons of coal won by this party. The Hikurangi Coal-mining Company considered the mine exhausted, and it is doubtful if any company could have mined the coal at a profit, yet I understand this co-operative party have done well. There is yet a little thin coal remaining. I examined the mine several times during the year.

Cunningham and Son's Co-operative Party (Crown Lease, Section 48, Block XVI, Hikurangi Survey District).—The coal-seam is from 4 ft. to 5 ft. thick, and there is only a small area available. The mine is about one mile from the county Marua-Hikurangi Road, and a ground tram-lime run to it. I examined the mine several times during the year.

Foot and Doel's Crown Lease (Section 4, Block XVI, Hikurangi Survey District).—I examined the mine several times during the year. In one section of the mine the pillar coal is being worked, and there are many tons of coal yet available. These men are working coal that was left in by three former mining parties, as it was considered to be unprofitable. No doubt the present high price for coal enables the present party to work at a profit.

Rayburn Colliery, Hikurangi (Christey's Freehold).—This mine was opened during the year. At first the prospects were considered good, but later the coal was found to be soft and a portion of it unmarketable. I examined the mine and found the coal-seam to be from 4 ft. to 5 ft. thick.

Accidents.

No fatal or serious accident occurred in the North Auckland division of the Northern Inspection District during 1920.

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. PETER HUNTER, Inspector).

Pukemiro Colliery.—This mine is worked in two sections, north and south respectively, which are not connected in any way. Each section is ventilated by a Burnsted and Chandler fan. The endless rope in the North section has been extended, and two subsidiary endless ropes have been put into the sections. These ropes are driven by electric machinery underground and cut down manual labour to a minimum. In the south section the coal is being hauled by a main rope, but preparations are being made to install the endless rope in the near future.

Rotowaro Colliery.—A new main road, 11 ft. by 8 ft., is being driven from the surface with the intention of installing an endless rope and cutting out the present system of haulage by main rope. The new generating plant is not yet completed. No further development work has been done at the No. 2 mine.

Waikato Extended Mine.—This mine has been working more energetically this year than formerly. A large portion of the output has been conveyed by river to Hamilton, Mercer, and Ngaruawahia, and put in railway-trucks, the balance being distributed amongst settlers and flax-millers on the banks of the Waikato and Waipa Rivers.