

ANNEXURE A.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF MINES.

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (WILLIAM BARCLAY, Inspector of Coal-mines).

IN compliance with the Coal-mines Act, I have the honour to submit the following report:—

OUTPUT OF COAL.

The total output of coal from Northern District mines for the year ending 31st December, 1936, was 795,837 tons, as against 837,620 tons in 1935. Of this return 712,391 tons were raised from the Waikato field (738,594 tons in 1935), 62,094 tons North of Auckland (72,866 tons in 1935), and 21,352 tons from several small coal-mines in the Taranaki District (26,160 tons in 1935).

The average number of men employed below and above ground in production of the yearly output was 1,469, as against 1,433 employed during the year 1935.

The large mines were inspected monthly, and at least two visits were made to the smaller ones during the year. In addition, the Workmen's Inspectors make frequent inspections of the principal mines on behalf of their organizations. These inspections serve a useful purpose in satisfying the miners as to the general safety of their working-places and by drawing attention to defects reported by the workmen, which the managers readily consent to remedy.

No fatal accidents occurred during the year. Three miners sustained serious head injuries due to falls of coal, and these injuries might have been avoided by the use of "hard hats" or "helmets." The number of miners who were injured and disabled for more than three days, as reported for purposes of payment of relief from the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, was 484.

The miners enjoyed regular employment during the year, with the exception of occasional days off due to shortages of railway wagons, failures of machinery, and to other causes over which the management had no control.

Through the intervention of the Minister of Mines an agreement was made by the companies to screen slack coal through a smaller mesh than formerly. As a result much less slack was dumped at the Waikato mines during the year.

New mine development during the year consisted of the installation of three and three-quarter miles of aerial ropeway from the Egmont Tatu mine to a railway connection at Mangaparo, and to the extension of two stone dips at the Waro Colliery owned by the Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd.

It is pleasing to report that the downward trend of employment has been arrested and that many experienced miners have been reinstated in the mines.

HUNTLY SCHOOL OF MINES.

Increasing interest was taken in the school, and twenty-four students attended the established classes. The School of Mines supplies a want felt by many individual miners and mine labourers, and the provided facilities for obtaining a technical knowledge of mining subjects are highly appreciated by the students and managers of the industry.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS OF EACH COLLIERY FOR THE YEAR 1936.

North Auckland District.

Waro Coal-mines (Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd., Owners).—Coal-production ceased on the 30th June due to the exhaustion of the coal remaining in pillars in No. 6 Section.

The two stone dips set away during the month of October, 1935, have been advanced over the abandoned workings contained in Perrett's West Section.

No. 1 drive has been extended through massive limestone at a grade of 1 in 3·7 to 941 ft.

No. 2 drive (return airway) has been advanced 816 ft. through broken limestone; of that distance 604 ft. were driven at a grade of 1 in 3 and 212 ft. at 1 in 2½. The grade was steepened for purposes of effecting an earlier connection to the coal-seam proved ahead by No. 3 borehole.

Boreholes drilled at short intervals through the floor from the face proved that the seam was dipping at the same grade as the advancing dip, and preparations were then made to crosscut into the seam proved to the north at No. 3 borehole.

The flow of water in each drive is of a manageable quantity having regard to the porous condition of the limestone roof cover. The water is discharged to the surface by three-throw ram pumps, electrically driven.

The permanent Sirocco fan has been installed and an air drift has been connected to No. 2 drive.

Hikurangi No. 2A Coal-mine (Lease from Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd.: Lawson and Party).—Operations in No. 2 drive have been continued, and five miners have been constantly employed in winning an output from a shallow seam 6 ft. thick lying near the railway boundary of Section 39.

Hicks and Party (Perrett's Area).—The party extracted the pillars remaining along the boundary of the railway reserve at Waro Station. The area was abandoned following a subsidence that occurred on railway land, due to the coal being removed too close to the boundary-line.

The Rocks Area.

Fearnley's Coal-mine.—The party continues to extract coal and fireclay from seams containing 3 ft. of coal and 2 ft. of fireclay.

Laurie's Coal-mine.—This mine was closed down.

Orr and Party.—Prospecting on Section 41, McLeod's Freehold, revealed a seam of coal, 5 ft. in thickness. A well-timbered drive was advanced to the old workings from where the pillars were removed outward.

The Rocks Coal-mine (Latham and Party).—Two drives, following outcrop coal, were driven in a seam, 2 ft. thick, and the mine was subsequently abandoned due to the thinness of the coal-seam.

Gilby's Coal-mine.—This mine was abandoned during the early part of the year as the prospect was not promising.

Coutt's Coal-mine.—As the area was exhausted this mine was abandoned.

Jones and Party (Tauranga Block).—The party has been operating in the bottom seam, 4 ft. thick, of an area formerly worked by the Northern Coal Co., Ltd. (in liquidation). The pillars to the south were extracted and provision for drainage was made for the working of the seam to the north.

Silverdale Colliery (Crown Lease: S. Foot).—The mine remained closed throughout the year.

McInnes's Coal-mine (Crown Lease: Tunstall and Party).—During the past eighteen months the party extracted 8,000 tons of coal from part Section 2, Block XVI, Hukerenui Survey District. Following the exhaustion of the coal the party prospected adjoining areas, but failed to locate another workable section of coal.