

however, Inspectors have an immediate remedy under Part VI. of the Act, providing for penalties for offences, which penalties may be recovered in a summary manner.

I referred in my last report to the inspection of mines other than coal, including gold mines, and the position of this matter remains the same. Mr. Inspector McLaren inspects the gold mines at the Thames and Coromandel, being chiefly deep-level workings within a compact compass, under "The Gold Mining Districts Act, 1873," and his report upon these mines is included in the annual report upon the goldfields; but as the Government has decided not to undertake the inspection of the scattered gold mines in the South Island, which could not be done without an increased staff of Inspectors, "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," has not been introduced in any of these cases. The effect of the operation of the Act during sixteen months has been to induce a new feeling of responsibility on the part of coal mine owners and managers with regard to the method of working their mines, and this can only be increased in degree as the necessity of observing the Act becomes more apparent, and the Inspectors make more frequent inspections of mines within their districts.

Step by step the reins have been drawn tighter, and although the condition of many of the coal mines is by no means entirely satisfactory at the present time, a great deal has been done by owners and managers towards establishing precautions against accidents, both by the expenditure of money in effecting improvements for safety, and by the observance of rules designed to establish the better working of the mines.

Within eight months from the present date, it will be necessary, in accordance with section 10 of the Act, that many of these mines shall have a second opening to the surface as a means of egress for persons employed in the mine, and as I have already pointed out, the second outlet has now been completed in some cases.

The Kaitangata Railway and Coal Company's mine, which was the scene of a terrible explosion just before the Act was brought into force, is by the district inspector's latest reports considered to be in a satisfactory condition, and one of the reports shows that the company has been at great pains to effect improvements, and to observe the provisions of the Act.

Notwithstanding, however, these facts, and anything which the Government may do in the matter, accidents of the most serious nature may occur, and it is well that mine owners and managers, and all persons employed in and about the mines should keep the fact in mind that the real safety of their mines depends upon unceasing vigilance shown by themselves in taking every precaution against danger. It will not, however, be the fault of this Department if they are not constantly reminded of their duty in this matter.

OLIVER WAKEFIELD.

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*Proclamation of Mining Districts under "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874."*

HERCULES ROBINSON, Governor.

A PROCLAMATION.—Whereas by "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," it is enacted that the Governor may, for the purposes of this Act, from time to time proclaim and define one or more mining districts within any province in which this Act shall be in force, with such boundaries as he may think convenient; and the Governor may from time to time alter the boundaries of any district, and he may also assign to such district a name by which it may be known for the purposes of this Act: Now, therefore, I, Hercules George Robert Robinson, the Governor of New Zealand, in pursuance and exercise of the power and authority contained in the hereinbefore in part recited Act, do hereby proclaim and declare that the mining districts within the Provincial Districts of Auckland, Marlborough, Nelson, Westland, Canterbury, and Otago, described in the Schedule hereto under the names set over each district, shall be mining districts within the meaning and for the purposes of "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874."

SCHEDULE.

*Kawakawa Mining District.*—Comprises the Counties of Mongonui, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, Whangarei, Hobson, Rodney, Waitemata, Eden, and Manakau, including the Great Barrier, Waiheke, and other adjacent islands.