

The character of the coal necessitates the employment of a considerable quantity of timber, notwithstanding which small falls have occasionally taken place, leaving the roof exposed to the air when it is inclined to shale off. The ventilation of the mine is generally good, but in a number of the headings the air was very hot, although not unworkably so. The manager is now carrying through new air courses, working at the same night and day, and as soon as these are completed, this evil will be remedied. The workings of this mine are not very extensive, and seem generally to be carried on with the safety of the miners in view, and in concordance with the provisions of the Act. A considerable quantity of slack (which is unsaleable) has been allowed to accumulate in the mine, and should this heat, although not immediately dangerous to life, might endanger the workings. In regard to the workings only general instructions could be given to the manager to exercise the greatest care and closest supervision to prevent falls of coal, which, from its nature would drop without giving much warning. No gas has as yet been seen in this mine.

*Whau-Whau Mine.*—The main entrance to this mine is through a long drive principally in the slate, and this from the mouth, inwards, for a considerable distance is timbered. This timbering being now old is getting rotten in places, and these insecure portions are being renewed. The old workings are generally in bad order, principally from the roof shaling off where exposed to the weather, for a height of about a foot above the coal. The coal in these old workings is generally of a tender nature, but in that portion of the mine now being wrought it is a good standing solid coal, and by leaving a portion of the coal to form a roof the air is prevented from acting on the green sandstone, which is readily affected by the air and is then liable to shale off. Large quantities of slack have also been left in the wastes of this mine, and part of this has heated and fired in consequence of the decomposition of the pyrites in the coal and roof, but by closing up all openings and preventing the admission of the air, the fire appears now to be extinguished, but the stoppings have not yet been removed. Very few men are working in this mine, and these few are exclusively employed in the new workings, and as the mine is being worked by a party of working miners, any instructions to wall-off or render secure the old workings, would have the effect of closing the mine, so that we have not considered it desirable to be harassing in the discharge of our duties in this case. The air in the new workings is good, but at one or two places it is not all that could be desired, and in many parts of the old workings it is very hot. A little black-damp is at present being given off from the area on fire, but not so much as to be felt in the workings. Messrs. Love and Dunsmuir, the lessees of this mine, are anxious to conform to the provisions of the Act as far as their means will allow, and are taking all reasonable precautions in their new workings. There was no sign of gas in the mine during our visit, and the proprietors assure us that they have never found the slightest trace of it.

*Kawa-Kawa Mine.*—When Mr. M'Laren last visited this mine all the lower workings were flooded. These, through the erection of additional pumping machinery, have now been freed from water, and the mine systematically wrought, the output being from 150 to 160 tons per day. The shaft in which sinking operations have been carried on for the last eighteen months or two years, has now bottomed on the coal at a depth of about 190 feet, and from this they are now driving up on the rise of the coal towards the wrought portion of the mine, and after this is accomplished, which will be in less than a month, the output will be considerably increased. A stone drift is at the same time being pushed forward at a depth of 19 feet below the coal, and this will allow of a large reservoir for the water in case the pumping machinery should get out of order, and will also render the workings drier under ordinary circumstances. The old workings in this mine are now all but impassable except in certain parts, but air is still taken through them and brought to the upcast of the present workings. The air in the new workings is taken down by the old incline, spread through the workings, and the return current is delivered by the new incline, at the end of which the new Tangye pump has been erected, and under ordinary circumstances the heat of the steam pipes is found to be sufficient to cause a good current of air, but on a close day a furnace is also lighted. On the day of our visit the air was very good throughout the workings. The coal now being wrought is very hard and is got out by blasting, but arrangements are made by which no shots are fired except at 3 o'clock, when they are all fired simultaneously and the mine is then left clear for about one and a half hours until the smoke has been drawn out, when the night shift starts. Generally speaking a sufficient quantity of timber appears to be employed in the mine, and with the exception of No. 1 level on the left of the new incline, the coal was standing well, but in this it was shaling off from the sides in places, the level being driven on the end of the coal. When the coal has been holed through from the sinking pit the air will take a different course from the present, but this does not need comment now. There is a great deal of water in this mine due to feeders, which are being struck along a line of fault which is being met with in the lower levels, and a considerable quantity of surface water also finds its way into the mine in consequence of the old workings having fallen in. Up to the present time no trace of gas has been discovered in the workings, and these are inspected every morning by the deputy overman before the men are allowed to go to their work, his report being entered in a book, which is kept for the purpose. The mine is in possession of safety lamps, which will be used in case of an emergency. A short time ago part of these workings caught fire in consequence of a fall of the roof, the pyrites in which by its decomposition generated sufficient heat to ignite one of the pillars. This fire was extinguished, but not permanently, by a stream of water which was taken by pipes from the top of the incline to the face, but it has since been found necessary to wall off the ignited area, and the fire appears now to be got under as all the stoppings are cool. This mine appears to be worked under careful supervision and the provisions of the Act complied with.

We have &c.,

The Under Secretary for Mines,  
Wellington.

S. HERBERT COX, Inspector of Mines,  
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