

in coal mining, more especially in this case when the coal is so near the surface and having a soft clay roof overhead. I intend shortly proceeding to this district to see that the operations are being carried out with safety, as where pillars have already been wrought out the ground has caved in from the surface. The principal coal on this company's estate lies on the opposite or west bank of the Waikato River, and from the positions indicated to me by the manager where he had sunk shafts there must be a very large area of coal. Preparations are now being made to work this mine, which is known as the Kupa-Kupa mine, and was formerly wrought to a small extent. A splendidly graded incline has been made from the mine to the river, and a large new main tunnel which for some distance has been timbered in a most substantial manner. The seam will average about 17 feet in thickness, and appears to be solid, good standing coal, having, I am informed, a good roof. From the plan of operations as proposed by the manager, there is every intention of working this mine in a systematic manner, though there may be some difficulty in regard to air until they get the ventilating drive completed. I am informed they intend at present to convey the coal across the Waikato River to the railway in barges, but considering the extent of coal to be wrought and the thickness of the seam, the cost of throwing a bridge across the river would be amply repaid.

The Under-Secretary for Mines,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JAMES M. M'LAREN,
Inspector of Mines.

[TELEGRAM.]

Auckland, 11-6-80. To Under Secretary for Mines, Wellington.—New manager of Miranda Colliery telegraphs to me to-day in reply to my enquiries *re* plans "Engineers have been engaged *re* plans and sections required by you, will be ready end of next week."—J. M. M'LAREN, Inspector of Mines.

Mr. Inspector M'LAREN to the UNDER SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines Office, Thames, 31st May, 1880.

Referring to portion of my general report of date 31st March, 1880, *re* Waikato Colliery. Huntley, I have the honor to inform you that on my last visit, on the 7th instant, I found the mine had become most dangerous. I advised the manager to withdraw the men and close the mine, showing him it would be better to leave the little coal that remained than run any further risk. He agreed with me, and promised at once to do so, after he had lifted the rails, &c. Before I left I saw the men withdrawn from the most dangerous parts. Being, however, afraid that he might be induced to try and draw more coal, I telegraphed to him from Auckland on the 10th instant as follows:—"Am anxious have you withdrawn the men and closed down the mine?" I received his reply that he had, and had shifted his men to the mine (Kupa-Kupa) on the west side of the Waikato River. The mine, therefore, known as the Waikato, is now wrought out and abandoned.

The Under Secretary for Mines,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JAMES M. M'LAREN,
Inspector of Mines.

No. 4.

INTERIM REPORT UPON INSPECTION OF MINES, CANTERBURY AND OTAGO.

Mr. Inspector BINNS to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,—

Mines Department, Wellington, 12th September, 1879.

I have the honor to make the following interim report on the condition of the coal mines in Canterbury and Otago:—

Springfield Colliery, Kowai Pass, Canterbury.—"The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," appears to be carefully observed at this colliery. Every morning all the working places are examined, and a mark left. A written report of the examination is made. The ventilation is pretty good; the roof very bad, but timber appears to be set where necessary. A plan is kept. Fire-damp is occasionally seen, and this, in conjunction with the bad roof, will render the greatest care necessary.

Homebush Colliery, South Malvern, Canterbury.—No steps have apparently been taken to observe the Act at this colliery. There is no plan. Special Rules have not been hung up. General Rule 23 has not been kept. No examination of the mine is made before the men enter, and the owners have not even one safety-lamp. Altogether the mine seems to be worked in a very careless manner. No fire-damp has as yet been found, but it is by no means certain that this state of things will continue for ever.

Prince Alfred and St. Andrew's Coal Mines, Oamaru, Otago.—These mines are both worked by Mr. Willetts. The Act is not observed in any respect; but as they are on a very small scale, with no shafts, no boys employed, and no machinery, the only points to be observed are section 17, and General Rule 23.

Shag Point Coal Mine, Palmerston, Otago.—Although no explosive gas has been found in this mine, it is by no means unlikely that such may some day exist; and this possibility, added to a bad roof, will render the greatest care necessary. Although the Act is not observed altogether—for instance, as regards sections 13 and 17 and General Rule 23—yet great care appears to be taken to prevent accidents. Every working place is examined before the men enter, and Mr. Williams, the manager, will in future see that a mark is made on the end of the place, and a report of the condition of the whole mine made in writing. I have also suggested that the wastes should be periodically examined. The ventilating shaft for the new mine is not yet down to the coal, and the air in those workings is not very good, but this will doubtless soon be remedied.

Green Island Colliery, Otago.—The following points required attention:—(1) all the men were not supplied with rammers of some other material than iron or steel; (2) the shaft required fencing; (3) the cages were not covered; (4) the engine was not furnished with an indicator; (5) the engine and machinery were not sufficiently fenced; (6) the report mentioned in General