

become self supporting in the supply of steam and smithy coals. An essential factor in this development is the improvement, now begun, of the bar harbors of Westport and Greymouth. In the success already attained at Greymouth, there is good promise of that most desirable object being attained there, for the depth of water on the bars, determines the class of vessels that can be used as colliers. At Greymouth, only about three years ago, vessels, carrying 200 tons, had difficulty in crossing the bar, whereas now, vessels carrying 600 tons can as easily be employed. The s.s. Taupo recently left with 900 tons. In contrast to this the colliers from Newcastle load up to 3000 tons or more, and there are much greater facilities there for loading as well. All this clearly shows the importance of improving, as rapidly as possible, the harbors and appliances at Greymouth and Westport, so as to enable a much larger class of vessels to be engaged in the trade, as it is the quantity carried on the same bottom, and the facility of despatch, that lessens the cost of distribution. At present, a ton of coal can be delivered at Port Chalmers or Lyttelton by the class of vessel engaged in the Newcastle trade, about as cheaply as from the West Coast.

ACCIDENTS.

There were three fatal accidents during the year, each resulting in the death of one man, and one very serious accident, probably disabling one man for life, all from the same cause, viz. :—Falls from the roof. Several of the minor accidents were due to the same cause.

This points to the necessity of great care, both on the part of the managers and miners, in securing the roof as they proceed. It is difficult for inspectors to guard against this class of accident, for, under varying circumstances, it becomes a matter of judgment, when extra precautions should be taken, in timbering the mine.

There were accidents to other 19 men; 3 had each a leg broken; 2 were slightly burned by explosion of gas; and the injuries to the rest, were comparatively trivial, the men resuming work within a day or two.

The number of accidents has been: 1 for every 56 men employed, or 1 for every 20,906 tons produced; and the number terminating fatally has been 1 for every 427 men employed, or one for every 160,283 tons of coal raised.

CONCLUSION.

The gold and coal production of New Zealand have had a very material bearing on its advancement as a Colony, and as no country can become commercially great, that is destitute of mineral productions, it is of the first importance to develop those which the Colony possesses, by every rational and attainable means. One way is to invite the attention, of those possessing capital and skill in mining, to what is in the Colony, so that its resources may become developed by them, and occupation be found for an increasing population, in a greater variety of industries, than exists at present.

The approaching Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London will afford such an opportunity of drawing attention to the mineral resources of New Zealand as may not occur again within a generation. The Department will, therefore, for that reason, and in compliance with the invitation of the Commissioner to the Exhibition, Dr. Von Haast, collect mineral specimens representative of the Colony's resources, and as this is no mere Departmental concern, but is in the interests of all, circulars have been issued inviting the assistance and co-operation of public bodies, and those engaged in mining throughout the Colony. It is all the more necessary to use every exertion to secure a good representation, inasmuch, as New South Wales, and the other colonies, are already making elaborate preparations, to have their resources displayed to the best advantage.

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