

where the accident occurred, by hand labour, is deserving of censure." On making enquiry, I elicited the following information: On the Sunday previous to his death, Carr informed Robert Davidson, engine-man, that it was his intention to go down and have a good sleep, and in the ensuing conversation he stated that he was in the habit of sleeping at the pump. Coupled with Mr. Shore's suspicions and the fact that, not only did he not get out of the way of the truck, but was unable to give any account of the way it struck him, I came to the conclusion that the unfortunate young man was sleeping at the time.

On the 28th May last, a miner named Sheard was killed in the Brunner Mine by a fall of coal. At the time I was on my way from Auckland, and it was quite impossible for me to go the West Coast. It will be remembered that on the recommendation of a jury at Greymouth, Mr. Gow, of Kumara, was appointed to act at inquests when it was impossible for me to attend.

PROSECUTIONS.

It has not been necessary, during the past year, for me to institute any proceedings under the Act; but several cases have occurred which will doubtless have a better effect than if the initiative had been taken by the Department.

On the 2nd September, 1884, the police, acting at the request of the Westport Coal Company, prosecuted three miners for riding up the incline; the penalty in each case was 10s. and 30s. costs. There is now an excellent track, and Mr. Dickson informs me that he has forbidden the practice of walking up the incline.

On the 23rd Sept, 1884, William Heffernan, who was prosecuted by the Brunner Coal Company for having, on the 8th of that month, passed the appointed station in the mine before his working place had been examined by the underviewer, pleaded guilty, and was fined 5s. and costs.

On the 10th November, 1884, John Ord, underviewer of the Brunner Mine, was prosecuted, as described in the accident report.

NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED.

During 1884, there was very little change in the number of men, which was 1017, above and below. The output per man, however, is largely augmented, being 370·5 tons per man, as against 311 the previous year.

OUTPUT OF COAL.

The output for 1884 was 376,828 tons—an increase of 48,826 tons over 1883; the principal advances in quantity being:—Banbury Mine, 39,190 tons; Brunner Mine, 10,235 tons; Walton Park Colliery, 8,416 tons; Fernhill Colliery, 8,236 tons; Green Island Colliery, 2,831 tons; and Koranui Mine, 2,689 tons. Those mines which show a falling off, are—Shag Point Colliery, 20,238 tons; Homebush Colliery, 6,741 tons; Canterbury Colliery, 3,708 tons; and the Kaitangata Mines, 2,958 tons.

DEATH-RATE IN THE SOUTH ISLAND.

During 1884, there were 3 fatal accidents in this Island; the death-rate, therefore, is 125,609 tons raised, and 339 men employed per life lost; or 2·95 lives lost for every 1000 men, which is by no means a favourable result.

METHODS OF WORKING.

<i>Worked by Shaft:</i>					
Steam-power used	...	...	...	8	
Horse-power used	...	...	...	5	
				<hr/>	13
<i>Worked by Adit:</i>					
Horse-power used	...	...	...	8	
Hand-power used	...	...	...	32	
Engine planes	...	...	...	7	
No information	...	...	...	3	
				<hr/>	50
<i>Open work:</i>					
Open work	...	...	...	26	
				<hr/>	26
					<hr/>
					89
					<hr/>

I have, &c.,
 GEORGE J. BINNS,
 Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.