

now being commenced to open up the dip-coal on the north side which has been proved to exist by borings taken last year. A wharf and railway-siding are being constructed at Huntley to allow the coal from this mine being loaded into the trucks, instead of conveying it by water to Mercer as at present. This, together with the improvement in quality, should cause an increase in the demand, as the coal will reach the market direct, instead of being several days on the road exposed to the atmosphere, as it now is.

5. *Taupiri Colliery, Huntley*.—In the higher workings about 200ft. of narrow work has been driven in a north-easterly direction. The coal thins out here towards the swamp, and is very irregular both in roof and floor. The pillars are all standing well in this part. No coal has been taken from the middle workings since my last report; but in August last a fire occurred through spontaneous combustion in three bords that had fallen in. This has been stopped with sand, and the fire has every appearance of being entirely extinguished. It proved very severe on the men when trying to stop it. About 130ft. of headings were driven in the lower workings, and the coal was found to thin out near the swamp adjoining the Hakuoa Lake. On the west side of the mine the coal was found to take a dip, and an incline was driven of 1 in 5, following it, at the foot of which a height of 14ft. of coal was obtained, of very good quality. A new sixteen-horse-power Tangye pump has been placed inside, as the old one was found to be insufficient, and a large upright boiler outside, and the tubing of the old boiler removed. There are now two winding-engines and two pumping-engines, with an aggregate of about forty-six horse-power. The first accident that has occurred in this mine took place on the 22nd ultimo to a man named George Smith, an old, experienced miner. It was caused by a fall from the roof. The coal did not fall directly on him, but caught him sideways and broke his leg. When I reached there on the 28th May, I visited the place and found that everything had been left as it was at the time of the accident. It appears that the underviewer (Mr. Coxon) was at the place about twenty minutes previous to the accident occurring, and, not liking the sound of the roof, ordered it to be timbered at once. Smith was in the act of preparing to do this when a wedge-shaped piece of coal, about 6ft. long and 2ft. wide, broke away suddenly from the roof, and partially jambed his leg against some soft coal. I visited Smith on Sunday, 30th ultimo, when he informed me that he considered no one was to blame. This mine continues to increase its output, yielding 37,225 tons in 1885, against 35,470 tons in 1884. It still continues under the management of Mr. Collins.

Accidents.—During the year 1885 and up to the present date there were no accidents to any of the miners other than that to which I have alluded at the Taupiri Mine.

General Remarks.—It was expected that the works at the new mine at Maramarua, near Foote's old mine, would have been started by this time. I believe the canal is cut; but some machinery has yet to come from England for the steamer to tow the barges.—The borings on the education reserve near Huntley have, I understand, been continued till lately, but I have not heard with what result: 16ft. of coal was formerly stated to have been the result.—At Whareora, about eleven miles from Whangarei, which I visited about two years ago, and where I found an outcrop of coal about 2ft. thick, further prospecting has been carried on. A shaft 33ft. deep has been sunk under the charge of Mr. Love, of the Whauwhau Mine. This has developed two seams of coal—one of 3ft. 3in., and the other 6ft. in thickness, both of these thickening in the shaft towards the dip. It is a brown coal, but apparently one of a superior quality.

I have, &c.,

JAMES M. McLAREN,
Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary of Mines, Wellington.

No. 2.

Mr. Inspector BINNS, F.G.S., to the UNDER-SECRETARY OF MINES.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 5th May, 1885.

I have the honour, in accordance with section 40 of "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," to make the following report for the information of His Excellency the Governor:—

During the eleven months that have elapsed since my last report was sent in the whole of my time, excepting about a fortnight spent in examining the Kanieri Coalfield, has been devoted to fulfilling the duties incidental to my position as Inspector under "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," and "The Westland and Nelson Coalfields Administration Act, 1877." Reports have already been made on two inspections of the Reefton quartz-mines.

Attached to this report are tables of statistics and accidents—the latter not quite so numerous as during the previous year. I have to thank those managers and owners who have kindly furnished me with particulars of outputs, &c.

The following report gives a short account of any matter of interest appertaining to each mine:—

Pelorus District.

Picton Coal-mine, Picton.—During the year 1885 this mine has been quite idle. In December last, while at Picton, I made inquiry as to whether the shafts were properly fenced, and was informed that they were.