1888.

NEW ZEALAND.

COAL-MINES OF NEW ZEALAND.

(EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF INSPECTORS.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

NORTH ISLAND.

No. 1.

Mr. Inspector McLaren to the Under-Secretary of Mines, Wellington.

Sir,— Inspector of Mines' Office, Thames, 23rd March, 1888.

As required by section 59 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1886," I have the honour to report on the coal-mines of the northern districts of Kawakawa and Waikato for the year ending the 31st December, 1887.

The total output of coal from both the above districts in 1887 was 98,710 tons. This is somewhat less than the output in 1886, which was 104,794 tons.

During 1887 there have been two new collieries opened, viz., the Miranda and the Taupiri Reserve, both of which are in the Waikato District. I have also been informed that two new seams have been found within the Kawakawa District; one at Ngunguru, not far from the sea-coast, between Whangarei and the Bay of Islands, and the other somewhere in the same district, which, the finders believe, is also not far from the coast, but they are, as yet, unable to give any probable distance, as they found their way to it from inland. The first (Ngunguru) is on Maori property, and the other is also believed to be on land belonging to the Natives.

Kawakawa District.

1. *Kawakawa Colliery.*—The quantity of coal raised in 1887 was 35,078 tons, being 4,303 tons more than during 1886. About 75 per cent. of the coal obtained has been from the No. 2 District, which lies in a south-easterly direction from the former workings; the other 25 per cent. was obtained from No. 3 District, which is on the dip side of No. 2. In this locality (No. 3 District) a fault was met with in the latter part of October, the coal there being found to be depressed vertically about 14ft. A heading is now being driven alongside this fault. The coal here is of excellent quality—hard, pure, and bright—and exhibits the following section: Roof consists of hard green sandstone, in places containing impressions of shells; underneath this roof there is a seam of coal 1ft. thick, then a thin band, then another seam of coal 3ft. 3in. thick; the floor consists of fireclay, under which comes the primitive rock, geologically called dioritic slate. The seam of coal in this mine is extremely variable as regards thickness. The roof in nearly all places in the workings is very bad, and so treacherous that enormous quantities of timber have to be used, and the most constant care and strict supervision exercised by the manager, Mr. T. P. Moody, and his assistant-manager, Mr. John Swinbanks. The good results of this care are shown by the fact that no accidents have occurred—a result contrary to what might be expected from the nature of the roof. It is worthy of note that during the existence of this mine, now nearly twenty years, only one fatal accident has occurred. Considering the large output of coal and the number of men employed, this is a record of which the management may well be proud. Mr. Moody deserves credit for adopting every precaution for the protection both of life and property, the safety of the men's lives being in all cases his first consideration. At the date of my last visit, 19th January, 1888, a fall from the roof to the rise of No. 2 level had caused a partial stoppage of the ventilation, but this was being attended to, and the ventilation would be quite restored by the following day. The operations of this mine for the half-year ending the 31st December, 1887, have been more favourable than during former corresponding periods—a result hardly to be expected considering the depressed state of the market.

2. *Whauwhau Mine.*—The output from this mine during 1887 was 8,473 tons, being wholly obtained from pillars. Towards the north a heavy fault was met with, which appears to completely cut off the coal. The manager, Mr. Love, informs me that in a trial boring downwards, near the end of the main heading, the bed-rock was reached at between 30ft. and 40ft. below the level, which points to the fact that the coal here must have an upthrow. The company are pro-