

SESS. II.—1897.
NEW ZEALAND.

INSPECTION OF COAL-MINES REPORT.

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

No. 1.

Mr. GEORGE WILSON, Inspecting Engineer, to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES.

SIR,—

Mines Department, Wellington, 25th June, 1897.

I have the honour to forward you covering report on the progress of the coal-mining industry for the year ended the 31st December, 1896.

The output of coal from the mines throughout the colony for the past year amounted to 792,851 tons, being an increase on the previous year of 66,197 tons. The output comprised 473,637 tons of bituminous coal, 110,547 tons of pitch-coal, 179,744 tons of brown-coal, and 28,923 tons of lignite.

Mining operations were carried on in 163 mines, in connection with which 1,937 men were employed. The year 1896 has been most disastrous, on account of the loss of life through accidents. An explosion in the Brunner Mine on the 26th March, 1896, caused the death of sixty-five men, whilst in the Fernhill Mine, on the 25th August, an accident occurred whereby one man lost his life. Other accidents resulted in serious injuries to the men, and several accidents not of a serious nature were reported.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE WILSON,
Inspecting Engineer.

No. 2.

Mr. GEORGE WILSON, Inspector of Mines, to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines' Office, Thames, 15th January, 1897.

I have the honour to transmit to the Hon. the Minister of Mines the following report on coal-mining in the Auckland District, made in compliance with section 67 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891," for the year ended the 31st December, 1896:—

KAWAKAWA DISTRICT.

New Bay of Islands Coal Company's Mine.—The work carried on in this mine continues to be prospecting and working out old pillars, but so far no very great quantity of coal can be obtained in one place. The return for the year was 13,967 tons, being an increase of 2,971 tons compared with last year's output. The secretary, Mr. Kirkpatrick, gives the following account of the works: "The new workings at the outcrop have now been worked out. The dip at the screen, put in to catch a supposed rib of coal under Mr. Moody's last dip, has not been so successful as was anticipated, and will not, I fear, return the outlay. We are thus thrown back on our original workings in Matthews and party's old mine. We have had great trouble with the creek, which has filled our workings twice, and, in order to save the coal, we have found it necessary to carry the creek round, above the workings, over the ground already fallen in. It will be securely flumed all the way, and carried partly by an open cutting and partly by a tunnel. The necessity of doing this work has prevented us proceeding with the prospecting work at Moody's outcrop, but as soon as possible we intend to resume operations there. We are exceedingly anxious to proceed with this work, as, should no fresh coal be discovered, the present mine could not last at the present rate of output over twelve months." The prospects of this company are not of a very encouraging nature, although energy and perseverance are directed towards exploration works. It would appear, however, that unless a further extension of the seam is discovered the available coal will shortly be all worked out. The mine is carefully worked, the men employed being experienced miners.

HIKURANGI DISTRICT.

West Bryan's Mine.—The chief work carried on during the year has been drawing the pillars in the older portion of the mine above water-level. The dip to work the coal below water-level has also been driven to a considerable depth. The output—9,539 tons—has been about 109 tons more than last year.