

Rolleston Coal Lease.—A party of men was engaged for some time in opening up at the surface the seam lying between Walton and Graham's mine and the railway. There is, however, no connection made with the railway, and no output has been recorded.

Phoenix Mine.—This mine was worked by Matthews and party up to the 13th November, when it was taken over by the Phoenix Coal Company. The workings are from the adit-level, and the roof being good, and the coal of a firm nature, the places are safe. The output was 2,100 tons, being a decrease of 797 tons compared with last year's return.

WHANGAREI DISTRICT.

Kamo New Mine.—This mine has been worked in a small way. During the year 873 tons of coal was taken out from old pillars, being a decrease of 1,130 tons compared with last year.

NGUNGURU DISTRICT.

Kiripaka Mine.—This mine has been continuously worked during the year. The ventilation is good, and the working-places safe. Abundance of timber is kept ready for use. No serious accident occurred during the year. Mr. Wright, the manager, reports as follows: "During the year 1896 the mine has been steadily worked as the circumstances of trade demanded. The seam continues to rise in an easterly direction, at an inclination of about 1 in 8, the thickness varying from 3 ft. 6 in. to 9 ft. A large 20-ft.-rise fault was met with in the advance workings, but this has been penetrated, and the seam found to be 7 ft. thick, of a better quality, and harder. The management is now preparing to lay a short self-acting incline through this fault to deliver the coal at the head of the main incline, which runs the coal to the tunnel-mouth, a total distance of 20 chains. Air-shafts are sunk on the hillsides near the outcrop of the seam to insure efficient ventilation; the mine is very damp, and shot-firing is carried on where necessary. About 20 per cent. of the output has been wrought from pillars, in which work a large quantity of timber has to be used. A short incline has been laid and a tunnel put in in the hill across the gully to the westward of the original openings, the outcrop here showing the seam at 5 ft. 6 in. of clean hard coal. In wet weather a large quantity of water comes through from the surface where the pillars have been extracted and drains away out the tunnel-mouth without the aid of any machinery. It does not at any time affect the bord workings." The output for the year was 20,233 tons, being an increase of 1,364 tons compared with last year's return.

The Panapo and Maori Coal-mines are now owned by Mrs. Callaghan and party, but very little work has been done, and no coal has yet been mined.

Great Waitangi Mine.—This is a coal lease, of an area of 34 acres, lately granted to Messrs. G. S. Budge and George Boyd. A considerable amount of work has been done in prospecting, and a seam of coal from 5 ft. to 6 ft. in thickness exists on the land. The owners intend to transfer their rights to a company, which intends to place the property on the English market. A considerable time will elapse before any coal can be sent to the market, as a tramway at least seven miles in length will have to be constructed from the mine to Ngunguru Harbour.

WAIKATO DISTRICT.

Waikato Mine.—This mine is being steadily worked. During the year the southerly workings were carried to the outcrop, and all pillars in that direction will soon be taken out. The chief portion of the coal has been derived from pillars, in the drawing of which great care is exercised, and very little coal is lost. The cost of timber and increased supervision adds materially to the cost of working out the pillars. No serious accident occurred during the year. The output for the year was 14,233 tons, being an increase of 1,789 tons compared with last year.

Taupiri Extended Mine.—The return of coal during the year was 28,988 tons, and shows an increase of 3,021 tons, compared with last year's yield, which amounted to 25,967 tons, instead of 40,160 tons as shown in report for 1895. The underground operations have been principally in the east and west districts. The coal maintains its good quality, and the output could be doubled if trade increased. The workings are all in good order, and safe. The quantity of air passing through the workings is 20,000 cubic feet per minute, and the ventilation is good throughout. Mr. Tattley, the manager, reports, "We are putting down a bore-hole about 10 chains in a north-westerly direction from No. 2 shaft for the purpose of proving the strata to a depth of about 1,000 ft. below our present seam, which was passed through at 172 ft., and proved to be 20 ft. thick. Before cutting the main seam we passed through two seams of coal, 8 ft. and 5 ft. thick respectively. The bore is now down 210 ft."

Taupiri Reserve Mine.—The chief workings in this mine are under Lake Kimihia. The cover over the coal is of sufficient thickness to insure the safety of the mine. Large pillars are left, and after the first working nothing further will be done in removing any portion of the pillars, so that the probability of any subsidence is very remote. The extension of the dip has been carried on, and new machinery placed in position to pump the water. Mr. Jonathan Harrison, the manager, gives the following description of the work: "During the year 1896 two new Tangye's steel boilers, of 20-horse power each, to work up to a pressure of 100 lb., have been erected, and a new brick chimney has been built. A new engine and pump, to lift 15,000 gallons of water an hour, have been placed in the mine, with 3 in. steel steam-pipes and 6 in. steel delivery-pipes. The new dip extension is now down 7 chains, and is still progressing in good coal. The dip of the coal continues at 8 ft. to 1 chain. This gives us 220 ft. of cover under the lake. The whole of the slits, returns, and old workings are regularly travelled and inspected. All the reports at the mine are kept up. The Mining Acts and special rules are posted at the colliery. The ventilation is taken weekly, and is very good. Hard clay is sent into the mine, and kept in each bord for shot-ramming. Bore-holes are regularly put up in the bords and levels. The output of coal for the year was 18,660 tons, being an increase of 1,525 tons on last year's return.