

Bombay Mine.—The owner of this mine says that, on account of the coal being so broken and dirty, he has taken out just sufficient for the demand, the whole output for the year being only 18 tons. He intends to put another drive in the hill near the house, when he hopes to meet with better success.

Mokau Mine.—This mine is owned by the Mokau Coal-mines Syndicate (Limited), which has expended a considerable amount in further opening up the mine, and in the purchase of a steamer suitable for the navigation of the Mokau River. The output of coal is greatly increased; 1,943 tons was shipped for 1896, whilst the output for 1895 only amounted to 535 tons. Mr. R. Paterson, engineer for the syndicate, says, "Since the present company took over the mine, towards the close of 1894, they have had virtually to open a new mine. The old workings had stood idle so long that the wooden roads, &c., were rotten. The principal work, therefore, has been opening new ground, to be worked on a better principle. Two main drives have been started from the end of the old drive running in an easterly direction. All the coal to the north of them will be taken out in 7-chain blocks, leaving everything between the drives and the river untouched. An air-drive has also been started out to the south, towards the river, at an elevation of 45 ft. above the mouth of the main drive. The roads have all been relaid and graded, the wooden roads done away with, and iron rails laid throughout the mine. Much has also been done outside. The bin for shipping coal has been roofed; new platforms laid with double road and double screens; blacksmith's and carpenter's shops, magazine, office, stable, store, and dwellings built; and a new road has also been formed to take the slack further up the gully, and clear of the stream, &c. The coal has greatly improved in quality under the solid ground of the main range. The band of shale between the seams, which in some places reached a thickness of 4 ft., and gave an immense amount of extra labour, has now in the most northerly workings gone down to 3 in., and promises in a short distance to run out altogether. The height of the coal remains about the same—7 ft.—and also the dip of the coal—about 1½ in. in the yard. The company has had the misfortune to lose two steamers within a few months, which has seriously retarded the development of the mine. We are in hopes of having another steamer shortly. No accident of any kind has happened during the year. When the new air-course is through, which I expect will be in about two months, we will have a good supply of air till we reach our eastern boundary."

ACCIDENTS.

No accidents of a serious nature were reported during the year, although minor accidents occurred whereby several persons were incapacitated from work, and availed themselves of the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, the contributions to which are regularly paid by the coal-mine owners.

The provisions of the Act are carried out in all the mines throughout the district.

REMARKS.

The output for the year shows an increase of 9,240 tons from mines north of Auckland, and 7,749 tons from mines south of Auckland; total increase, 16,989 tons.

The increased demand for steam-coal in the Hauraki goldfields has largely assisted in causing the additional output from the mines north of Auckland.

A much greater output could, if necessary, be maintained from the mines throughout the Auckland District.

The Under-Secretary of Mines, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE WILSON, Inspector of Mines.

No. 3.

Mr. N. D. COCHRANE, Inspector of Mines, to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines' Office, Westport, 12th May, 1897.

I have the honour, in compliance with section 67 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891," to report as follows on the West Coast coal-mines for the year ending 31st December, 1896:—

Puponga Coal-mine, Collingwood.—(26/9/96): This is a new lease, taken up by Messrs. Taylor and Walker, and is situated near Cape Farewell, some sixteen miles from Collingwood. Only prospecting has been done so far, near an outcrop which at one place shows as much as 8 ft. of coal, of a very soft nature, and with a band in the centre. A drive was put in on this seam for 50 ft., but it has been allowed to cave in. Five shallow shafts have been sunk, but these were standing full of water, work at the time of my visit being confined to cutting a track from the coast-line near Puponga Inlet to the mine, at which two men were engaged. From the position of the outcrop, and the soft nature of the coal, it is probable that what is seen is only a slipped portion, and the solid has yet to be found. Should good hard coal of a fair thickness be proved, this may turn out an important mine. Recently driving has been gone on with, to cut the seam in the solid.

Pakawau Coal-mine.—(26/9/96): This coal-seam continues of the same banded nature as formerly, and is worked accordingly on the long-wall system. Only two men were at work, but usually four are employed. The west level has been extended and driven out to the surface, so a second outlet is provided, as well as very good air. The roof is a bad one, but plenty of timber is used. The report of the examinations of the mine is kept. Another coal-seam, which occupies a higher position in the sequence, has been found more to the west. Some 17 chains of surface tram-line has been made to this, and a short drive put in. Some more timber is required here, and Mr. Caldwell will have it attended to. This seam is divided by only one parting, about 8 in. in thickness, and the total working-height is expected to be about 3 ft.

Wallsend Mine, Collingwood.—All work has ceased at this mine.

Enner Glynn Coal-mine, Nelson.—(21/9/96): Work in the inclined shaft on the coal-seam has been suspended, and a new vertical shaft sunk in the rock for 160 ft., at which depth a stone