

REMARKS.

The output of coal for the year shows a slight increase (1,473 tons) over that of the previous year. There is abundance of coal which can be worked in the Auckland District at a small cost, and a much greater output could be maintained if necessary.

I have, &c.,

JAMES COUTTS,

Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.

No. 3.

Mr. ROBERT TENNENT, Inspector of Mines, Westport, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines' Office, Westport, 20th April, 1898.

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 the 31st December, 1897:—

Puponga Coal-mine, Collingwood.—The interest in this lease held by James Walker has been purchased by Joseph Taylor (co-partner), and necessary operations outside the mine are being pushed on, as he intends to put coal on the market for the coming winter.

Pakawau Coal-mine.—(2/11/97): This mine is situated seven miles from Collingwood, and is owned and worked by William Caldwell, who employs two men. During the year work has been chiefly confined to opening out a fresh section on the west side, and an easterly tunnel has been driven in the coal 150 ft., and is connected with an uprise to the surface which provides good air. This coal is much superior in quality to that obtained from the old mine, and is conveyed to the loading-hopper over a substantial tramway 17 chains in length. The west level, which extends to the surface, is retimbered, and in good repair. Air on both faces is good. Timber is plentiful, and freely used. Reports daily kept.

Enner Glynn Coal-mine, Nelson.—(14/10/97): The coal on face of south-west level is pinched out 260 ft. from winding-shaft, and a further extension of 40 ft. is driven, following the vein, but with unsuccessful results. The coal is chiefly worked by stoping, employing four men. Before commencing work an examination of the mine is made with a safety-lamp, and daily reports are kept. Timbering is well attended to, and is well set. At my request, the bottom section of upcast shaft has been furnished with ladders, and a 3 in. partition-wall newly completed. Good air is provided.

Mokihinui Coal-mine.—(2/7/97): Work has been suspended since December, 1896. The charge of the mine is intrusted to John Lenehan, whose duties are to attend to and keep the pumps in working-order, make daily inspections of the mine and report accordingly. The dip haulage-road and back incline form the two entrances, and provide every facility for natural ventilation. Notwithstanding the soft nature of the pavement and long suspension of work, the roads and airways are in fairly good condition, and on each of my visits the air was good. The timber stands well. I found gas in a hole of the roof at bottom bord. This was easily removed, and has since remained clear. Three visits were made.

Cardiff Colliery.—(15/9/97): This mine has been steadily worked, and the output over the preceding year has increased 13,849 tons. The chief seat of mining operations is extended from the termination of main haulage-road, and the coal won from this district is of superior quality. The roof requires careful timbering, but this work is strictly attended to, and a plentiful supply of timber is always at hand. Brattice on west level required to be carried forward on working-face, which was done at once. Twenty miners are employed on day-shift and ten after noon. The level section of solid workings which runs between the two main faults still continues in good coal, and it is safe and in good working-order. The pillars worked from the outcrop on No. 1 incline are very satisfactorily removed, and, as great care has to be exercised for the safety of the miner, every precaution is taken. A sandstone roof covers the coal, and is easily timbered. By the erection of a 7 ft. diameter fan of the Schiele type the ventilation is very much improved, and a current of air of 22,000 cubic feet per minute circulates the workings. The haulage plant has been completely renewed, and important extensions carried forward on the workings. I drew Mr. Broome's attention to the heavy timber in entrance tunnel to mine, and on a later visit this timber was thoroughly overhauled, and a number of new sets put in. This part of the road is now in good repair. No gas reported. Manager's and foreman's reports daily recorded. Rules posted. William Cain, a hooker-on at the termination of haulage-rope, was injured by a runaway truck which was let loose by the breakage of a chain-clip. His injuries were not serious.

Gravity Creek Colliery.—The development works of this new and extensive colliery are completed, and mining operations during the year have been carried on very successfully. A steady current of air, measuring 16,000 cubic feet, travels the workings, and is well led up to the faces. The mine throughout is safe and in good order. Timber is freely used, and spragging is strictly observed. Return airways and working-places were tested by alcohol-flame lamp (Stokes' patent), but no trace of gas could be detected. The coal is principally worked on the rise or western side from main haulage-road, and this district is divided into twenty-four working-places, employing forty-seven miners. A prospecting heading, to prove the field towards Mine Creek, is being pushed ahead night and day. Four coal-cutting machines of the percussion type, actuated by compressed air, hole the coal in the eastern or Dip section on the afternoon shift, and it is afterwards blasted down by authorised officers during the night, when the coal is left ready for the fillers. The results from these coal-cutting machines, and the suitable application of compressed air for working underground machinery, have been so far satisfactory that the management has added a duplicate air-compressing engine to their plant, built by George Leyner, engineer, Denver, Colorado. The incline tramway, over which the coal is conveyed to the screening- and loading-banks, situated on the Government