

1899.
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 for MINES.

SIR,—

Mines Department, Wellington, 6th April, 1899.

I have the honour to forward you covering report on the progress of the coal-mining industry for the year ended the 31st December, 1898.

The output of coal from the mines throughout the colony for the past year amounted to 907,033 tons, being an increase on the previous year of 66,320 tons. The output comprised 538,477 tons of bituminous coal, 36,432 tons of pitch-coal, 298,365 tons of brown coal, and 33,759 tons of lignite.

Mining operations were carried on in 177 mines, in connection with which 2,003 men were employed, the average output being 453 tons per man per annum. One fatal accident, due to the negligence of the deceased, occurred during the year. The Act and regulations are strictly adhered to in most of the mines.

I have, &c.,

GEO. WILSON,
Inspecting Engineer.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 2.

Mr. JAMES COUTTS, Inspector of Mines, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines' Office, Thames, 14th March, 1899.

I have the honour to transmit to the Hon. the Minister of Mines the following report on the coal-mines in the Auckland District, in compliance with section 67 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891," for the year ending the 31st December, 1898:—

KAWAKAWA.

The New Bay of Islands Mine.—This mine was continuously worked during the year, and gave employment to one man above ground and fourteen men below. The work has been chiefly confined to taking out pillars of coal on the extreme outcrop. The output of coal for the year ending 31st December, 1898, was 10,622 tons, being a decrease of 512 tons compared with the previous year. A letter, dated 25th January, 1899, has been received from Mr. D. J. Kirkpatrick, secretary for the company, stating that the coal where they have been working is nearly exhausted, and that the company would cease operations about the end of the month of January, 1899. No accidents.

Russell's, or what has been named the "Bay of Islands Consolidated Coal-prospecting Syndicate."—In the early part of the year boring operations were carried on to some extent by this syndicate on the west side of the township, in the swamp, and on the western side of the river, opposite the old Bay of Islands Company's No. 3 shaft. The first hole was put down a depth of 60 ft., when some hard rock was met with, which broke the chisel, and it was found necessary to abandon this bore-hole. A second bore-hole was then put down a few feet to the westward of No. 1 bore-hole, and a depth of 70 ft. had been attained when something was found, which Mr. Russell considered was the edge of the seam of coal where it had thinned out to a mere seam. The No. 3 bore-hole was put down 42 yards to the west of No. 2 bore-hole, and 5 ft. of hard coal was passed through at a depth of 90 ft. No. 4 bore-hole was put down at a distance of 110 yards west of No. 3 bore-hole to a depth of 136 ft., and at 129 ft. from the surface a seam of coal 2 ft. 4 in. was cut through. The seam of coal cut through in No. 3 bore-hole might be considered a sufficient thickness to warrant an outlay of money to open up a mine, provided there was some extent of coal to work out, and it was situated above water-level; but in this case the coal met with in the other three bore-holes is disappointing, and the places where the bore-holes have been put down are in a swamp, and are frequently flooded in winter-time; therefore the prospects of working the coal that has so far been discovered here to pay are not of an encouraging nature.