

ACCIDENT FUND.

The following table shows the increase on the amounts credited at the Post-Office Savings-Bank on the 1st January for the years 1897 and 1898:—

	1st January, 1897.	1st January, 1898.	Increase.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Westport Coal Company	1,424 9 11	1,665 9 9	240 19 10
Westport-Cardiff	44 9 2	118 16 6	74 7 4
Greymouth-Point Elizabeth	136 9 0	136 10 5	0 1 5
Blackball Coal Company	180 11 1	281 9 7	100 18 6
Total	1,785 19 2	2,202 6 3	416 7 1

The following shows the decimal rate of 1d. per ton, which includes all accidents that have occurred during the year: Westport Coal Company, 0·29; Westport-Cardiff, 0·23; Greymouth-Point Elizabeth, 0·57; Blackball Coal Company, 0·16.

FOREIGN TRADE.

During the year 1898 the Westport Coal Company shipped 10,708 tons of coal to ports outside New Zealand. This shows a decrease of 5,993 tons compared with the preceding year's shipments.

I have, &c.,

R. TENNENT,

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

Inspector of Mines.

No. 4.

Mr. JOHN HAYES, Inspector of Mines, Dunedin, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,— Office of Inspector of Mines (Southern District), Dunedin, 16th March, 1899.

As required by the provisions of section 67 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891," I have the honour to submit the following report on the mines visited during the year ending 31st December, 1898:—

CANTERBURY.

Springfield Colliery, Springfield.—(5/8/98): The workings are kept in very fair order. The roof is "short," and needs careful timbering. Several small faults are met with, and the coal varies considerably in thickness. Ventilation quite adequate, and the condition of the mine generally is satisfactory.

Canterbury Colliery, Sheffield (Austin Brothers).—(5/8/98): A new level tunnel has been driven to the seam from the base of the hill, and will shortly connect with the workings. This will greatly facilitate haulage, which is at present worked up a dip-tunnel. This latter will form an excellent return airway and second outlet. The system adopted here for working the coal admits of very little waste. A certain amount of water finds its way into the workings through the worked-out ground, and keeps the roadways in a very muddy condition. It is proposed to cut a deep gutter in the present haulage-level when the new tunnel is through, so as to intercept this water, and prevent it, if possible, following down the dip of the seam. A survey has been recently made. Ventilation very good. Roadways in rather a rough state.

Homebush Colliery, Glentunnel (T. Brown, Manager).—(4/8/98): I inspected all the working-places. The pillars are being extracted from the far end of the workings in a systematic manner, and Mr. Brown keeps the pit in very nice order. Ventilation quite satisfactory.

St. Helens Mine, Whitecliffs (H. Levick).—(3/8/98): This pit (5 ft. seam) is kept in very fair order, and is excellently ventilated. Report-books, &c., kept properly up to date. Mr. Levick has recently reopened a tunnel which was cut some years ago, and is working a seam about 3 ft. thick.

Hartley Mine, Whitecliffs (W. Leeming).—(3/8/98): At my last visit a dip-drive was being driven. This came into some old workings, and has since collapsed, owing to the drag from the worked-out ground and an influx of water from the gully overhead. Another tunnel is partly driven to reach solid coal (said to be 7 ft. thick), but at this date work is suspended, and the place is under offer to a company.

Wairiri Coal-mine.—(2/8/98): Owing to the faulty nature of the ground, the thinness of the seam, and the expense of carting to a railway, it has been found impossible to work this pit other than at a loss, and it is now closed. I found the workings in very fair order, and on returning to Dunedin gave notice to the proprietors as to supplying plan, &c.

Brockley Coal-mine.—(2/8/98): Some prospecting has been done recently, and the Brockley seam cut near the outcrop. At present an extension of the tramway is being made to allow of further prospecting being undertaken. No coals have been worked since my last visit.

Mount Somers Mine (G. Park).—(9/8/98): At present all the work is opencast. When water is available Mr. Park strips an area of surface by sluicing, but he has a short length of tunnel open, so that, if he is short of water for sluicing, underground work can be resorted to. Sufficient ground is stripped at present to meet requirements for a month or two, and work is in hand to strip another length of face.