

ANNEXURE A

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF COAL-MINES

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (R. H. SCHOEN, Inspector of Coal-mines)

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS OF EACH COLLIERY FOR THE YEAR 1944

North Auckland District

Kamo Colliery.—No. 3 Mine, No. 1 East Section: The pair of development headings have been continued in coal to a distance of 16 chains from the main haulage. Development has been slow owing to the presence of a band of fireclay in the upper part of the seam which necessitates close timbering. The quality of the coal is good. A pair of panel development headings have been broken away to the north-west.

No. 2 East Section: The upthrow fault reached by the development headings in 1943 proved to have a displacement of 25 ft., and beyond it the seam continued its grade of one in five, the coal maintaining its good quality and its thickness of 8 ft. Development was continued during the year a further 9 chains to a distance of 46 chains from the main haulage.

There have been no reports of inflammable gas at these development faces.

Late in December, 1944, another fault was met with. This has proved to be an upthrow with a displacement of 15 ft. to 20 ft., and the floor of the seam on the other side of it has been reached by driving. Panel development to north and south between these two large faults has been commenced.

No. 2 West Section: A connection has been made from this section by a pair of headings to No. 1 west section, and three headings are being driven to the rise in a south-westerly direction leaving a barrier against the old Harrison Mine workings to the east. These headings should soon be cut off by a continuation of the large fault lying to the west of them and running slightly west of south, but will make available a good tonnage of coal.

No. 4 Mine: Pillar-extraction is continuing in the area to the west of the Railway Reserve and north of Station Road.

Waro Colliery, Hikurangi.—Owing to a new fault having been struck in the No. 3 slope dip, further prospecting in this direction had to be abandoned in December. Repeated faulting in this section had made it most unlikely that any workable field of coal would be found here. Throughout the year the small output was produced from splitting and robbing pillars to the east of the main heading. As the seam thins to the east of the main haulage, and attempts to develop to the west have proved failures owing to faulting and inflows of water, it would appear that the life of this mine will not be longer than the time required to extract the remaining pillars, about eighteen months.

Arcoa Colliery (Pollock and Son).—A new party have taken over from the previous owners and have worked throughout the year on a fresh block of coal tested by boring and driving by foot and party. A small fire in the workings in November was successfully sealed off. The small output produced is sold at Dargaville.

Kiripaka Fireclay-mine.—A new open face has been started a quarter mile to the north of the old one. Four men are employed, the output of good-quality fire-clay being shipped from the Ngunguru River to Auckland.

Waikato District

Pukemiro Colliery.—North Mine: On the north side of the main haulage, pillar-extraction has proceeded to a line outbye of the stone drive some 27 chains from the mine mouth, while to the south the pillars at the rope end of No. 2 panel are being taken. Steady production has been maintained from this mine throughout the year.

South Mine (Taupiri Section): The three headings driven east from the Taupiri dip were stopped at the end of 1943 as the seam thinned. The Taupiri dip headings were continued to the end of 1944, but boring ahead of them does not encourage further driving. Some development has been carried out to the west. To the east of the main haulage of the section some pillar-extraction has been carried out from the point where the coal approaches an outcrop, a shaft having shown that the overburden was under 20 ft.

In the Horne's dip section some development is going forward to the south-west of the dip, and in this locality extraction of the remaining pillars at the Rope End was completed at the end of the year.

Pillaring has been continued and is well forward in the Mid and Nelson's Jig sections.

During October stoppings sealing a heating in the No. 1 right haulage road were broken and a fall 4 chain long spilled through. This work, which was successfully carried out largely through the efforts of members of the brigades trained at the Rotowaro Rescue-station, was done in most unpleasant and difficult conditions owing to the heat, ashes, and bad roof. The very complete arrangements for the operation were made by the mine-manager and the Supervisor of the Rescue-station, who were present throughout the work.

The ventilation of the section beyond the fire area has now been restored, the area cooled down, and a large amount of coal made available for future pillaring.

Renown Colliery.—No. 1 Mine: In the No. 1 north section (top seam) extraction of pillars has continued throughout the year in the panel to the east of the main headings, and good results have been obtained. To the west some development has been done to test the thickness of the seam in this direction.

No. 2 Mine: Pillar-extraction has continued, and by the end of the year had reached a point 19 chains from the main haulage.

Withdrawal of pillars from the district at the south haulage rope end and the panels to the west continued until early in November without serious interruption. On a Sunday inspection on 12th November the examining deputy reported firestink on the main haulage of this district. An inspection made with the aid of proto apparatus located the heating near the rope end, and within two days men of the rescue brigade, assisted by members of the mine staff, had succeeded in sealing off the section. After restoring the ventilation it was found possible to proceed with work in No. 4 west panel. The sealed-off area was re-entered on 10th March, 1945, when the original heating was found to be due to a fall, and by the erection of two permanent stoppings was sealed off, allowing work to be resumed in the area.

No. 4 South: These development headings reached their limit at 22 chains from the main haulage, where, owing to the quick thinning of the seam, pillar-extraction in retreat was commenced. The extraction of pillars in the No. 2 panel east of the headings was also started, and by the end of the year about half the pillars had been extracted.

No. 2 Mine: The four main headings now being driven have been extended to a point 62 chains from the mine entrance. The coal is of good quality and maintains its thickness of some 14 ft. Two panels have been partly developed to the east towards the McDonald boundary, and the entries for a third are being driven. All development is by coal-cutting machine, giving very fast extension of the working-places.

Wilton Colliery.—No. 1 Mine: Pillar-extraction of the remaining pillars of this mine gave employment to a few miners throughout the year. A few pillars of outcrop coal were also worked from drives outside the mine entrance. This work was completed and the mine abandoned at the end of December.

No. 2 Mine: Pillar-extraction continued throughout the year and the face of work has reached a point 11 chains from the mine entrance. Development of the Dawson's area continued. In this section an 8 ft. downthrow fault was met and crossed to the south of the heading. The seam at this fault was 8 ft. to 10 ft. thick. In the main heading the seam thinned to the west to 5 ft. thick, while the outcrop, some 4 chains away, showed 4 ft. 6 in. of coal. It seems unlikely that the remaining area is worth developing.

No. 3 Mine: During 1944 the east headings were driven to the outcrop and the remainder of the panel between them and the outcrop completely extracted with the exception of a few pillars near the eastern mine entrance, which are now being worked. B panel, between the eastern headings and the main headings, was completely developed and is ready for pillar-extraction. Development to the west of the main headings stopped at 5 chains, the seam thinning and being split by stone bands in this direction.