

The total output of coal won from the mines in this district for the year ended the 31st December, 1899, amounted to 141,128½ tons, being a decrease of 7,261½ as compared with that obtained during the year 1898. The figures are as follows:—

	Output for 1898.	Output for 1899.	Decrease.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
North of Auckland	74,140	67,323½	6,816½
South of Auckland	74,250	73,805	455

There has been a falling-off in the coal produced from the coal-mines in this district during the year as compared with the previous year, partly, no doubt, owing to the quantity of coal from the West Coast of New Zealand being put on the market at a reasonable price, and in some cases (where coal has to be carted a long distance) consumers considered it cheaper to use the West Coast coal. This coal is of a superior quality, and, although a higher price is paid for it, a less amount is required in proportion to do the same work.

ACCIDENTS.

A fatal accident happened in the Ngunguru Coal Company's mine on the 2nd May, whereby Alexander Scott, a miner, met his death whilst in the act of drawing out props where pillars had been worked out, as reported on fully by Mr. Ryan (Assistant Inspector) on the 10th May, 1899.

An accident, which turned out to be of a serious character, happened on the 28th July to John Henry Duffy, a miner. Whilst at work in Ralph's section of the Taupiri Coal Company's mine a piece of coal flew from the pick and struck him in the eye. Some time previous to this accident he lost the sight of one eye through a similar misfortune, and this happening to the other eye caused him to be almost totally blind, and has rendered him unfit to follow his ordinary employment.

There were also thirty-one other accidents reported, but not of a serious nature. Twenty-one men received aid from the Miners' Accident Relief Fund in terms of the amended regulations for the management and administration of funds and moneys under section 69 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891." The other ten men were either not long enough off work to entitle them to any money, or they did not comply with the regulations.

The total number of day's pay provided out of the Relief Fund was 702, which, at 2s. 1d., amounted to £73 2s. 6d.; the amount paid for total disablement was £50; for funeral expenses, £10; and £15 was granted to the widow of Alexander Scott: making a total of £148 2s. 6d.

I have, &c.,

JAMES COUTTS,

Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.

No. 4.

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

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines' Office, Westport, 9th April, 1900.

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 ended 31st December, 1899:—

Puponga Coal-mine, Collingwood.—(11/9/99): The owner, Joseph Taylor, is still hopeful that a large industry will yet be established at his colliery in the Puponga Valley. The developments comprise three new tunnels, which vary in lengths from 3 ft. to 12 ft., and intersecting coal-seams, from 6 in. to 5 ft. in thickness, intermixed with fireclay bands. Timber is set in a most careless manner, and the owner has been informed that the adits must be retimbered previous to further work being done, which he has promised to carry out. Mr. Taylor anticipates that an extensive trade will be opened with Nelson at an early date.

Pakawau Coal-mine (Caldwell, owner).—(11/9/99): During the year there has been no coal raised. A new rock tunnel was driven 150 ft., striking the coal-seam to the full dip westward; but beyond providing an outlet for ventilation purposes nothing further is done. Screening-, washing-, and storage-bins are built near the mine-mouth, and a mile and a half iron-laid surface-tramway connects the mine with a new loading-wharf. On a later visit operations were still suspended and the property deserted.

Motupipi Coal-mine, Takaka (manager, J. E. Golding).—(13/9/99): It is difficult to give a correct statement of the work done at this mine, from the fact that at all times when visited the place is deserted. The dip-heading is standing full of water. The output for the year was 40 tons.

Enner Glynn Coal-mine, Nelson.—(24/8/99): George Wise and William Bennett work this mine. The deep workings where the fire existed are still under water. In March last operations were resumed on the outcrop, from the old surface adit, which strikes the coal-seam behind the incline-shaft. The seam has a vertical position, is well timbered, and ventilation is good. As a household fuel it finds a ready local market. Reports kept.

Mokihinui Coal-mine.—With the exception of pumping the water from the Hutt seam dip-heading, mining operations are still suspended.

Cardiff Colliery (owners, Westport-Cardiff Coal Company).—(19/9/99): The output shows a decrease on preceding year of 25,174 tons. The chief centre of operations was on the western or bridge section of the coalfield. Developments were chiefly driven in the outcrops, but as the workings advanced into the solid country the coal assumed a soft character, which tended to deteriorate its quality as an article of commerce. Direct haulage from the western district to the loading-station on the Government railway-siding being a question of economy, the endless-rope terminal was extended, and placed, in conjunction with the self-acting haulage terminus, at the