

*Hikurangi Coal Company.*—The manager is still directing the operations in the mine to that portion that lies on the eastern side of the railway-line. The level southwards has been driven as far as the seam extends in this direction at this level, and the men are now engaged in driving a few of the bords to the outcrop and splitting pillars. Similar work is being done on a section on the north side of the main incline. A new dip has been started from near the winding-engine shed, with the object of at some future time driving a haulage-road under the railway to open up the coal on the western side of the line. This dip at the time of my visit had been put down on the coal to within a few feet of the railway reserve. The water was then being pulled up the dip in tanks, but before much work is done here it will be necessary to erect an engine for pumping purposes, as a quantity of water will eventually be met with as the work proceeds. The company has been very successful during the year, although the output shows a slight decrease on the previous year. Still the profit on the year's operations was sufficient to enable the directors to declare the usual dividend, which must be highly encouraging to the shareholders. There was an average of fifty-four men employed, and the output of coal was 39,119 tons. The mine was inspected twice. The ventilation was good on both occasions, the workings safe, and abundance of timber and props at the mine to secure the workings as required.

*Northern Coal Company (late Hikurangi Collieries, Limited).*—This mine is worked from an adit level driven in from the side of the hill. The operations during the year have been mostly confined to development-work and mining coal on a portion of the property situated about half a mile in a north-easterly direction from the old mine which was worked out during the previous year. A horse tram-line has been constructed from the head of self-acting incline to the new workings, a distance of 42 chains. The coal—as far as it has been opened up—is of good quality, but is a good deal broken and disturbed by faults. It averages about 5 ft. 6 in. in thickness, but owing to faults being frequently met with the amount of coal obtainable from a given area is very uncertain. As the seam here is above water-level, it gives the company a natural advantage of being in a position to place the coal on the market at a small cost, and at a profit. The mine was inspected twice during the year. The ventilation was good, and the works generally carried out in a safe and satisfactory manner. An average of twenty-eight men was employed, and the output of coal for the year was 7,946 tons, an increase of 4,160 tons over the previous year.

*Phoenix and West Bryan's.*—Those two mines, which adjoin each other, are worked conjointly on behalf of Mr. S. C. Brown and others. The work in progress during the year has been confined to splitting and taking out pillars. In the West Bryan's section all the payable coal in sight has been extracted, and in the Phoenix the amount of coal opened up is very limited. Without prospecting-work is carried out and a new discovery is made outside the faults that have been met with, the prospects of producing coal in payable quantities for a lengthened period is very remote. A start has been made to put down a dip incline near the railway for the purpose of opening up some coal that is said to exist in this section of the property. An average of nineteen men were employed, and the output of coal was 9,901 tons. The workings were safe and ventilation good at each inspection.

*Ngunguru Mine.*—Operations in this mine have been steadily carried on during the year. Work in the "A" district (which was formerly the principal workings to the rise) has been confined to taking out the pillars, which will soon be exhausted. Some of the coal left in near the outcrop is thin, and will not pay to work. In the "B" district (to the dip) the work carried on has been chiefly directed to taking out pillars, which are nearly worked out. The "C" district (to the north of the workings mentioned), which was termed a new discovery last year, has opened up much better than the manager anticipated. The seam of coal has averaged 4 ft. 6 in. in thickness, and it is from this section that the largest part of the output has been obtained during the year. An average of forty-eight men have been employed, and the output of coal for the year was 18,017 tons, a slight increase on the previous year's production. A plentiful supply of props, &c., is always on hand at the mine, and every care is taken for the safety of the men. The ventilation was good when the mine was last inspected.

*Kiripaka Mine.*—The work in this mine has been confined to drawing pillars, which are rapidly becoming exhausted, although a larger amount of coal has been obtained from the pillars than was expected. This was partly owing to careful management and the use of a large quantity of props and other timber. There are now only a few pillars standing near the entrance of the adit level, which will soon be worked out, and should a new discovery not be made outside of this portion of the property the output will soon come to an end. An average of thirteen men have been employed, and the output of coal was 14,138 tons.

*Union Collieries, Limited (late Maramarua-Miranda).*—This mine was worked in a small way by Mr. William Tattley up to the month of June, when it was formed into a company, Mr. Tattley being retained as manager. Attention has been directed towards developing the mine and installing additional plant and machinery to enable the output of coal to be increased and handled more economically than hitherto. Since the company was formed several new cottages have been built near the mine for the workmen to reside in; another new horizontal Tangye boiler of 25-horse power has been placed in position on the mine; three new barges have been built, of a carrying-capacity of 57 tons of coal on a 3 ft. 6 in. draught, for conveying the coal by water from the mine to the Government railway (a distance of eleven miles), where a new wharf and railway-siding are in course of construction. The operations in the mine are still of a limited nature, and will be until some of the things mentioned are completed, the work being confined to opening up what appears to be a promising area of coal between the old Miranda Coal Company's winding-shaft and Foote's old workings. A good deal of trouble was experienced in dealing with the water, which percolated through the coal from the old workings referred to. It has now, however, been