

pany's property and of the mineral rights over private property, now secured a compact area exceeding 15,000 acres, covering the most accessible portion of the important Waikato Coalfield, which is traversed by the Main Trunk Railway and by the navigable River Waikato. Upon the completion of the purchase of the Taupiri West property, headings were at once commenced for the purpose of making an underground connection with the Taupiri Company's mine. These headings when completed will thus provide an outlet by means of the Taupiri West shaft on the western side of the river, in which locality the principal operations of the Taupiri company are now directed. The consideration of the mine-owners is now being directed to the advisability of bridging the Waikato and to sinking a new shaft to the dip of the present workings.

Recent explorations on the Waikato Coalfield, the most extensive and unbroken of the known workable coalfields of this Dominion, have proved its extension to the southward of the Akatea Village Settlement, a distance of about thirteen miles from the northern boundary of the Taupiri Company's property on the same coalfield. An area of at least 25,600 acres of the Waikato Coalfield has been practically proved to be coal-bearing. The quality of the coal exposed by many outcrops, the thickness of the seam, and other characteristics, prove that the thick seam, as worked at the Taupiri mine, extends over a very large area which is almost entirely freehold grazing property.

*West Coast Inspection District.*—The Puponga Company have improved their equipment by the installation of coal-cutters actuated by compressed air; and underground developments are being pushed ahead.

On the Buller Coalfield, the most productive in the Dominion, the Westport-Stockton Mine commenced active operations towards the latter part of the year, and mining has since been carried out by double shifts on a section off the B inclined haulage-tunnel (in coal) by the bord-and-pillar system of working. It is reported that the extensive electrical installation at this colliery is giving every satisfaction, and that the ventilation of the mine is well attended to. At the Millerton Colliery, the property of the Westport Coal Company (Limited), the equipment and development of the Mangatini section has been the most important work undertaken during the year. Upon this section it is proposed to instal coal-cutting machinery and employ an electrically driven "Sirocco" fan. The most important developments at the Denniston Colliery, the property of the same company, comprise the opening-up of the Waratea section by a main stone drive of considerable length. In other sections of this mine the solid work is kept well ahead of pillar-extraction, and the proportion of coal extracted is much greater than formerly. On the Grey Coalfield a strike at the Blackball Colliery extending over a period of eleven weeks acted detrimentally to the annual output, which, if this had not occurred, would, at the rate of production during the remaining part of the year, have shown an increase over former years. This company is improving its surface arrangements by the erection of storage-bins of 2,500 tons capacity, which are connected to modern screening and conveying equipment erected in convenient proximity to the Ngahere-Blackball Railway, now nearing completion. For the purpose of combating underground fires, if such appear, this mine is worked on the panel system, which permits immediate isolation of an affected area.

The extensive surface arrangements of the Paparoa Coal-mining Company (Limited), are nearing completion. The rock tunnels and viaduct on the main haulage-inclines are already completed, and a single-inlet "Sirocco" fan of 105 in. diameter (which it is estimated will produce 110,000 cubic feet of air per minute) has been installed. This mine will enter the list of productive collieries during the year.

The property known as Thornton's Lease, containing 1,640 acres, to the eastward of the old Brunner Mine, has been acquired by the North Brunner Coal Company (Limited), who, after a considerable amount of prospecting, have decided to lay down a colliery. A bridge across the River Grey, and a line of endless-rope haulage about 67 chains in length, will be necessary to connect the mine with the Government railway at Stillwater Junction, distant nine miles from the Port of Greymouth.

The Tyneside Colliery was irrecoverably flooded out on the 8th May by the River Grey, and surface flood-water entering the mine by old workings and broken strata, and the pumps being incapable of dealing with the influx of water, the workings became inundated. The pillar-extraction at this mine was within a few months of completion, so the loss of the mine has not been a very serious matter, as there was plenty of other work for the forty miners engaged at the mine prior to inundation.

*Southern Mining District.*—The underground developments at the Kaitangata Colliery, in the section to the eastward of the No. 7 fault, have proved an extensive area containing three seams—viz., the main 18 ft. and 6 ft. seams; but of these the former only is at present being worked, it being adequate for existing requirements. The panel system is now employed at this mine for the purpose of isolating any underground fires which may occur, and all dross is filled into trucks and removed from the mine as an extra precaution against spontaneous fires. As firedamp is occasionally reported as occurring at the coal-faces, and accidents therefrom have happened, safety-lamps only are permitted in this mine, these lamps being first tested with compressed air and then locked before being permitted to enter the mine. At the same company's adjoining Castle Hill Colliery similar precautions are taken.

At the Nightcaps Colliery the boundaries of the property having been reached by solid work on the bord-and-pillar system, the extraction of pillars is being carried out by working from the boundary homeward, and it is stated that a high proportion of extraction amounting to 85 per cent. has been attained. The area in which the fire occurred during 1907 is reported to be sealed up by stoppings. A considerable proportion of the output of this mine is obtained by opencast or quarrying; the seam being of considerable thickness. During the year Mr. John Lloyd, who for over twenty years has occupied the position of certificated manager of this mine, relinquished the same owing to indisposition.