

ANNEXURE A.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF MINES.

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. BOYD BENNIE, Inspector).

Taupiri Collieries Extended Mine.—The mine-workings are located in the north-west and south-west dip sections respectively. In my report of 1917 reference was made to a mine-creep in the No. 6 level, north-west section. The pillar coal crushed to such a degree that there was danger of fire; the section was therefore closed off and flooded with water, and remains so.

In the extension of the main dip heading, northern section, a considerable upthrow fault has been met with. At a point a few chains back from the heading-face a drive has been carried into the upper coal-seam, when it was found that only a few feet of fireclay separates the main and the upper coal-seam. The upper coal-seam is about 18 ft. thick, of good hard coal. It is intended to work the upper seam first.

The work throughout the north-west section is being vigorously prosecuted. At No. 1 level a stone drive is now being driven into Aitken's Freehold (Section 2), and when completed a branch of the main dip haulage will be extended into the coal area lying along the eastern bank of the Waikato River. It is believed that this section contains a large quantity of good coal lying adjacent to the old Kimihia Mine.

Western dip section: The upper coal-seam has been cut into at No. 4 level on the south side, and the workings have been driven close up to the Ralph's barrier pillar. The main and the upper coal-seams are separated by about 40 ft. of fireclay; the main seam has been worked under this new section, but the pillar coal has not been extracted. In the upper coal-seam methane has been given off almost continuously, causing some inconvenience and anxiety at times. Every precaution has been taken for the safety of the workmen, safety-lamps being used throughout the mine; in the western dip section generally this gas has been found more frequently than in the northern dip. The mine-workings are regularly examined, and the company's officials and the workmen's inspectors have made many inspections of the old and disused portions of the mine. No serious falls of roof have been reported during the year. The mine-workings are fully a mile from the winding-shaft, and the time occupied by the workmen travelling to and from their work in the mine is seriously hindering the daily output of coal. The western and northern sections at the heading-faces are each one mile in length from the junction at the fan shaft, and between the two headings there is a distance of one mile.

There appears to be an extensive area of coal yet to be worked in this mine. The present winding-shaft being too small to allow of more up-to-date means of raising coal preparations are being made to wind coal up the fan shaft also.

Work at the mine has been continuous through the year, and there have been no fatal accidents, nor any of a really serious nature.

Taupiri Collieries, Rotowaro Mine.—The main-adit dip has been extended to a length of 20 chains in hard coal. Nos. 1 and 2 levels have been driven 13 and 7 chains respectively, also in good hard coal. There are many segregations of stone in the coal. The mine is comparatively dry. The mining plant and installation of machinery is completed for the present. A sirocco fan has been installed, and the ventilation is good. A ground tram is about to be constructed to connect with the No. 2 Mine tunnel. The company has erected houses for the manager and the principal officials of the mine, also a number of comfortable cottages with modern conveniences for the miners, at the new township near the Rotowaro Railway-station. A comfortable change-room or shelter-shed has been erected at the mine. The miners have requested the company to build change and bath rooms as required by the Coal-mines Act.

Pukemiro Collieries.—The mine has worked continuously through the year, and, despite the loss of time by miners through the influenza epidemic, the output for the year was 114,458 tons, an increase of 25,083 tons above the previous year's output. No. 1 Mine continues to produce coal of the best quality, and no further faults have been met with. The section over the upthrow fault is opening up satisfactorily. The ventilation and conditions generally throughout the mine are good.

No. 2 Mine, beyond the downthrow fault: This mine is entered by an adit dip level of about 2 chains in length; the coal is of good quality, hard and clean, and free from bands of stone; but there are segregations of stone met with, as in No. 1 Mine. This is characteristic of the high-level areas of the Waikato coalfield. This section is not connected underground with No. 1 Mine. Electrical-haulage endless rope and an electrically driven fan have been installed. I have examined the colliery a number of times during the year and found it safely worked. The workmen's inspectors have made several inspections of the mine and old workings, and report them all safe. Methane has not been found in the mines, and open lights are used through the workings, with electric light and telephones at the haulage stations.

Waipa Collieries.—In the No. 2 section of this colliery the pillar coal is being worked by six miners, so that the quantity of coal produced is not great, and I anticipate that from six to twelve months will finish the mine. No. 3 section has not been reopened, and it is the intention of the management to work the coal beyond the upthrow fault from No. 4 Mine level section. A new