

granting of coal prospecting licenses over Crown lands. Section 5 makes provision for an Inspector under the Mining Act inspecting certain coal-mines. Section 6 amends the former provisions regarding the fees payable by applicants for examination. Section 7 specifies the qualification of Mine-managers for various classes of coal-mines. Section 8 amends the fees payable by applicants for certificates without examination. Section 9 makes compulsory the payment of overtime at overtime rates. Section 10 amends the provisions for the drilling of shot-holes, and for fuller examination of the working-places by the fireman-deputy, and for a report of any defect observed in such examination. Section 11 provides for the notification of accidents underground. Section 12 provides for power to prescribe fines for breaches of the regulations. Section 13 increases the maximum fine for a breach of the Act from £10 to £30. Section 14 includes the breaches of the regulations in the former provision for proceedings for recovery of fines. Section 15 amends the provisions for industrial disputes at the State Coal-mines. Section 16 prohibits any person employed by the Crown in connection with the administration of the Coal-mines Act, or in connection with the State Coal-mines, or any member of his family, from having any pecuniary interest in any coal-mine or coal-mining lease or license. Section 17 amends the qualifications required by an underviewer or fireman-deputy. Section 18 requires a record to be kept of hewers under the age of twenty-one years. Section 19 amends the provision respecting mine plans. Section 20 provides for the transfer of funds from the Coal-miners' Relief Fund to any sick and accident fund. Section 21 amends Special Rule 1 of the Second Schedule of the principal Act, and provides for the appointment by the manager of a sufficient number of officials to secure the proper working and supervision of the mine, and amends Rule 53, making it illegal for any intoxicated person to enter or continue about a coal-mine. Section 23 provides that on the assignment of any coal-mining lease the Minister may require payment of a proportion of the royalty in excess of 1s. per ton.

There were no alterations during the year to the regulations.

I have, &c.,

J. A. C. BAYNE,

Inspecting Engineer and Chief Inspector of Coal-mines.

ANNEXURE A.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF MINES.

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (MR. WILLIAM BARCLAY, Inspector).

Hikurangi, Waikato, and Mokuu Inspection Districts.

Hikurangi Coal Company (Limited).—No. 1 Colliery: Phoenix dip section was abandoned during the year, the remaining coal pillars being rendered inaccessible for extraction through surface water flooding the workings, and the means of drainage was inadequate to successfully cope with the abnormal quantities of water. The South dip was advanced 12 chains in the coal-seam, levels were broken off, and, having reached the determined boundary, pillars are being extracted. This coal-seam is much troubled by faulting and varying gradients.

No. 2 Colliery (under development): No. 1 upcast circular shaft intersected the coal-seam at a depth of 322 ft. The shaft has been divided into two compartments for ventilating purposes, and levels spaced 60 ft. apart are being advanced to develop working-sections and connect with No. 2 downcast shaft, which is in course of sinking, and a borehole is being drilled to connect with the workings of No. 1 shaft, allowing the water from the sinking shaft to be collected and pumped from the completed shaft. Machinery is being assembled for drainage, haulage, and ventilation, and an endless-rope-haulage tramway is being laid down to convey the output from the New Colliery to the company's permanent screens and railway-siding at Waro.

Wilson's Collieries (Limited).—Northern Tauranga: The output is derived from pillar-extraction, and the workings are becoming rapidly exhausted. The coal is delivered over a surface tramway to the Northern Coal Company's railway coal-siding. Six men employed under permit.

Wilson's Colliery (Waro Mine).—Several development dips were driven to provide future working-places. Pillar-extraction was commenced on the formerly first workings, north and south of the main-haulage dip. These pillars were of small dimensions, and roadways badly fallen, necessitating the cleaning-up of falls, and in some cases entirely new levels were required to reach the pillars. An outstanding feature of the atmospheric conditions directly the pillars are extracted and the roof fallen is the appreciable rise in the temperature in proximity to the falls, occasionally rising from 65° F. to 80° F., and also the abnormal quantities of CO₂ or free nitrogen that accumulate in the gob. In respect to these physical conditions, observations would lead me to conclude that the properties contained in the limestone-roof formation are in all probability the source of these actual chemical changes. Output maintained by three full working shifts. Additional accommodation is being provided in the bathhouse, and more suitable clothes-drying appliances are to be installed. A regrettable accident, involving the death of two miners, occurred on the haulage-road on the 4th August, caused by alleged misunderstanding of banksmen's and brakesmen's duties.

Kerr and Co. (McLeod's Freehold).—Mining operations have been safely conducted during the year by a party of co-operative miners on this freehold property. The workings are in close proximity to the Main North Road, and a sufficient barrier of solid coal has been left to support the road. Twelve miners ordinarily employed hewing and conveying the coal to the Waro railway-siding.

Silverdale (Foot and Doel: Crown Leases).—The mine is entered by three drives, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, and the coal-seam, which varies in thickness from 2 ft. 6 in. to 4 ft. occurs on the hilltops, and is generally found with little roof cover. Bords are broken off the levels, and immediately upon completion to a thinning of the coal-seam pillars are extracted, beginning at the innermost ones. A band of superior fireclay occurs in the coal-seam, and is mined in conjunction with the coal, transported to Auckland, and manufactured into firebricks and gas-retorts.

Northern Co-operative (Cunningham's Crown Lease).—During the past year several drives have been driven to win out small outcrop blocks left from former workings, but owing to the results being unremunerative these operations were abandoned and the plant transferred to the eastern boundary of the section, where the coal-seam was found outcropping on a rising ridge.