

*Hunua Coal-mine, Hunua.*—Mining operations were resumed in this small coal-mine during the year, and one mile of roadway was formed to permit motor-lorries being taken to the mine-mouth to take delivery of the output.

*Hauturu Coal-mine, Hauturu, via Kawhia.*—I have been advised that a party of coal-miners during the year conducted prospecting operations on Native land at Hauturu. Owing to lack of capital necessary to build a wharf for steamers and scows on the Kawhia Harbour, work was suspended, and prospecting is being carried out on a Crown area recently acquired.

*Old Stockman Mine, Mokau.*—The coal-seam of this mine averages 4 ft. in thickness, and the mine is worked intermittently to supply local requirements.—(Report per Mr. Paul.)

*Greencastle Coal-mine, Aria.*—A small coal-mine worked to supply the demands of Aria and local farmers. Operations safely conducted, and regulations observed.

#### *Dangerous Occurrences (Regulation 81).*

*Taupiri Extended Colliery.*—On the 9th December, 1923, Manager Makinson reported an unlocated outbreak of fire in the west section of the mine.

#### *Prosecutions.*

On the 10th April, 1923, a coal-miner was convicted and fined £5 and costs for taking, for the purpose of use, gelignite, a non-permitted explosive, into his working-place in the Taupiri Extended Mine.

On the same date, a coal-miner was convicted and fined £1 and costs for failing to set prop-sprags in his working-place in the Huntly Coal-mine. The Mine-manager, acting as underviewer, was charged with failing to observe Special Rule 11. The information was dismissed. A remarkable feature of this prosecution was that the miners engaged in the mine tendered evidence hostile to the Department and the coal-miner who was convicted and fined for failing to set props. The miner admitted the charge because no props were available in his place or in the mine. The Department sought to prove that the manager was equally culpable in not supplying the necessary timber.

On the 22nd May, 1923, a mine-manager was convicted and fined £2 and costs for failing to provide adequate ventilation in a northern colliery on the 20th February, 1923.

On the 15th August, 1923, a deputy was charged with "being the deputy in charge of the withdrawal of props, he did unlawfully use a scantling to knock out a prop, contrary to the provisions of the Coal-mines Act." The case was treated as a first offence under the Justices of the Peace Act, and accused was discharged on the payment of costs.

On the same date, a mine-manager was convicted and fined £5 ls. and costs for failing to comply with the provisions of section 85 of the Coal-mines Act; and the owner-agent of a colliery was convicted and fined £5 ls. and costs for failing to afford reasonable facilities to the check-weighman for the purpose of taking an account of the weight of the mine-skips.

#### *Serious Non-fatal Accidents during 1923.*

*Taupiri Extended Colliery.*—5th February: Herbert Lancaster, trucker, whilst trucking, sustained a severe strain of the ligaments behind his left knee; off work 294 days. 31st May: James Butler, trucker, slipped whilst trucking and fractured his right patella; off work seventy-two days. 3rd July: Fred Slater, trucker, sustained compound fracture and subsequent amputation of fourth finger left hand, the result of jamming his fingers in the skip-wheel while spragging; off work 100 days. 26th July: Dan Fletcher, miner, sustained severe injury to his eye owing to a piece of coal from his pick-point embedding in it; off work ninety days.

*Pukemiro Collieries.*—10th April: Walter Ward, shiftman, whilst engaged drilling, caught and injured his finger in his drill, incapacitating him for eighty days. 6th June: Francis Angus, miner, sustained partial loss of the sight of his right eye due to a flying piece of coal from his pick-point lodging therein; off work forty-six days. 7th June: James Greenwood, shiftman, sustained serious scalp-wounds owing to being struck by some timber whilst engaged drawing props; still off work. 10th September: E. C. Rodgers, trucker, sustained a severe hernia through lifting a full skip on to the road; off work eighty-one days.

*Hikurangi Collieries.*—19th January: James Pomfrett, miner, suffered the total loss of his right eye, due to being struck by a piece of flying coal from his pick-point; off work 112 days. 5th January: J. S. Leighton, shiftman, sustained hernia owing to undue strain whilst drawing a prop; off work sixty-two days. 10th April: Thomas Wright, miner, whilst descending the mine, caught his fingers in the shaft-lining, causing severe laceration of same; off work ninety-three days. 13th April: Fred Dunn, shiftman, severely strained his back whilst setting a prop; still off work. 11th October: John Pearson, shiftman, sustained ruptured muscle of calf whilst tipping a wheelbarrow; still off work.

*Wilson's Collieries.*—15th August: R. Turlington, miner, sustained severely strained hip, due to undue strain whilst working; still off work. 22nd December: James Bruce, shiftman, sustained compound fracture of right tibia, due to being struck by fall of stone whilst repairing return airway; still off work.

*Waipa Colliery.*—3rd January: J. Oliver suffered total loss of his right eye, due to being struck by a flying piece of coal; off work 134 days. 10th October: George Partis, shiftman, severely strained his right shoulder whilst carrying timber; off work seventy-seven days.

*Opaheke Colliery.*—6th April: A. W. Rix, miner, sustained total loss of his right eye, due to it being struck by a flying piece of coal whilst at work; off work sixty-four days.

#### *General Remarks.*

During the year notice was received of 583 accidents which occurred in and about the North Island coal-mines. Of these none proved fatal, and eighteen are classed as serious accidents whereby the persons were incapacitated for more than forty days. The remaining accidents were reported to the Mines Office for purposes of payment of coal-miners' relief. In the Waikato District there were ninety-five eye accidents, equal to 23 per cent. over all other accidents. A large number of these accidents resulted in either the total loss or impairment of vision of one eye. The bulk of these accidents are caused by flying fragments of coal from the pick-point, and it would appear that the only protection against such accidents would be some suitable form of face-protector. There is a widespread reluctance on the part of the workmen to wear goggles or face-gauzes even where they are provided free of cost. It is alleged that they are uncomfortable to wear, injure the vision, aggravate the deficiency of light, and increase the risk of other accidents. Recently the Hon. Minister of Mines offered to employ the services of an expert optician for the purpose of recommending a face-protector—one that would not decrease the miner's working visibility.

Ambulance-rooms on the surface fitted with cots and appliances for the exclusive use of first-aid treatment to injured miners have been erected at the Taupiri Extended, Rotowaro, Pukemiro, and Glen Afton Collieries.

Inspections on behalf of workmen: In all the principal coal-mines in the northern district advantage was taken by the workmen of the facilities afforded by the provisions of the Act, and the reports have been useful in furnishing the workmen's inspectors' opinions regarding the general safety of the mines, and indirectly in exercising a supervision of the firemen and deputies employed in the mines.

#### WEST COAST INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. C. J. STRONGMAN, Acting-Inspector).

##### *Coal-output.*

The output of coal for the year, 849,029 tons, shows a decrease of 30,954 tons on that of 1922. This is attributable to the labour trouble which caused the stoppage of the Paparua, Blackball, Stockton, Denniston, and Millerton mines from the 14th September till the end of the year.

##### *State Coal-mines.*

*Liverpool Colliery, No. 1 Section.*—The output from the upper seam workings in this section for the past year was solely dependent on pillar-extraction. Owing to the presence of small creeks over the workings it was necessary to split and rob some of the pillars.