ANNEXURE A.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF MINES.

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (William Barclay, Inspector of Mines).

Output of Coal.

The output from the Northern Coal-mines for the year 1933 was 626,926 tons, compared with 607,469 tons in 1932. During the first half of the year the miners suffered much idle time as a result of a decreased demand for coal, but, during the second half, increasing railway requirements led to better time being worked, and to the re-engagement of approximately a hundred discharged workmen. Although production increased by 19,457 tons the whole of the output was not marketed, and at least 30,000 tons of small coal was dumped at three Waikato mines as a result of the advent of hydro-electric power, and to the cessation of the demand for supplies for the generation of electricity by steam. The dumps are on fire, and the stored coal is being slowly reduced to ash, and unless other means are found for disposing of this product, the national loss of small coal will attain huge proportions following a revival of trade for domestic and steam coal. The increase in the Waikato district was 44,129 tons, and in the Hikurangi district the decline was 21,628 tons. Coal-cutting machines are in use in four of the principal Waikato mines and 70 per cent. of the coal produced in these mines is mechanically cut. The productive capacity of the working Waikato mines is equal to double the existing demand, and no new developments are required for many years. The decline in the Hikurangi district is due to the abandonment of the worked shallow workings, and to the fact that the porosity of the broken limestone cover over the deeper workings presents a problem and a menace to the exploitation of the seam to the dip.

Waikato Carbonization Plant.

Operations at the Waikato Carbonization Plant at Rotowaro were temporarily suspended at the end of the year, due to a reduced demand for carbonettes, and to the accumulated stores of manufactured fuel and oil.

Summary of Operations of each Colliery for the Year 1933.

North Auckland District.

Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd. (Shaft Colliery).—During the past year the mine has been worked by the Hikurangi Coal-miners' Co-operative party, which body entered into an agreement with the Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd., to work the mine on a contract basis. Mining operations were confined to the extraction of a few remaining pillars in the east side, and to the continuation of solid work in No. 4 east section. When the miners assumed control of the mine it was in a bad state of repair, due to the effects of a devastating fire which had closed the main airway and the return to No. 4 east section, and it cost the party fully £3,000 in wages and stores to combat the fire and restore the arterial roadways before output could be resumed in the section. As the rise coal was confined to narrow limits, the party was also compelled to follow the seam to the dip by the provision of 300 ft. of hard stone work. Normal mining operations were established in the month of June, and the manager and party should be commended for their efforts in saving the mine under the conditions occasioned by the fire. No inundations of surface water occurred during the year, and the installed pumps were run continuously for the discharge of the mine flow of 80,000 gallons of water per hour.

Wilsons' Collieries, Limited (Waro Colliery), (Sublessees, McGlashan and Party).—During the year four separate floodings of surface water forced the removal of the pumps to higher levels, and when the coal was exhausted in No. 6 section the co-operative party ceased all operations in the mine, and withdrew a portion of the plant to the surface. The question of the safe and economic working of this mine under the heavily watered roof-cover, and the natural seepage from faults and underground springs, is becoming serious, as three separate undertakings—namely, Wilson's Collieries, Ltd., Waro Co-operative Co., and McGlashan and party—have failed to hold the water at No. 7 section, where an area of dip coal is available for working. Subsequent to the cessation of control by McGlashan and party, the water steadily rose in the dip, and endangered the neighbouring Hikurangi Colliery, as evidenced by three floodings of the Hikurangi Mine occurring during the years 1926, 1929, and 1930, when the water rose to a height of 150 ft. in the Hikurangi Shaft Colliery and flowed into the Waro Mine at a point where a fracture occurs in the limestone roof-cover lying immediately above the protective barrier of 200 ft. of solid coal left between the respective mines. As a result of the abandonment of the Waro Mine and the unfortunate consequences which compelled the working party to leave derelict the whole of the dip workings and heavy plant, and as the accumulation of water was increasing the head against the protective barrier, the Hikurangi Co. was forced to take over the Waro Mine and plant in order that the installed facilities should be readily available for holding the water at a level where it would not endanger the future working of the Shaft Colliery. It will cost the company approximately £120 per week to hold the water at the fixed safety level, but that cost will probably be reduced by the winning of an output from "Perritt's" area, 50 acres lying contiguous to the Waro main dip and return shaft. The unification of these coal-mines under one management has long been desired, and, if an output can be maintained to cover the high pumping charges, the amalgamation of interests and machinery should provide the means for developing Perritt's area and the area of proved coal lying between McKenzie's dip and the Waro dip under the Hikurangi Swamp. During the year the Unemployment Board assisted the co-operative party by subsidizing the labour employed for filling in numerous sink-holes on the surface occasioned by the continuous pumping of surface water, and by the movement of the overlying broken limestone roof-cover. Wilson's Portland Cement Co., Ltd., also assisted the party by taking a maximum output, repairing machinery, and loaning moneys to cover difficult periods.

Crown Leases.—The following small coal-mines, operating near the Marua Road, Hikurangi, were actively worked for the production of steam coal from areas averaging 3 ft. in thickness: Silverdale Colliery (Foot's), Glen Nell Colliery (sublease from McIntyre and party to S. Foot), Phœnix Colliery (McKinlay and party), McInness's Colliery (sublease to Reyburn and party), Northern Co-operative Colliery (E. A. Cunningham), and Hick's Colliery (Hicks and Cook). The working-places were safely worked under good roofs, and a high percentage of the available coal was extracted. The outputs were carted to the Hikurangi Station, a distance of three miles. A road tax of 3d. per ton on the conveyed outputs is collected by the local bodies controlling the roads.

Ruatangata Colliery.—Operations were confined to the extraction of roadside pillars, and the available coal in the present dip is almost exhausted. Boring operations have been conducted during the year in an endeavour to prove another area of workable coal left by the Kamo Coal Co. when in possession of the mine forty years ago. An average daily output of 30 tons was raised and disposed of to railways and the brick-making plant at the mine.

New Kamo Coal-mine (Port Whangarei Colliery Co., Ltd., Owners).—An area of coal-bearing land, situated in close proximity to the Kamo Railway-station, and owned by Messrs. Felix and Wakelin Bros., has been bored and prospected, with the result that two separate seams of coal, 8 ft. and 10 ft., at depths of 90 ft. and