

1873.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE COAL FIELDS OF NEW ZEALAND,

(REPORTS ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

IN forwarding the correspondence which has passed relative to the development of the coal fields during the past year, I have the honor to report on the action which has been taken, and the results obtained in different parts of the Colony, and to make certain recommendations with reference to future explorations.

AUCKLAND.

1. *Wangaroa*.—The grant of £150 made to the Coal Prospecting Committee at Mongonui, which was formed for the purpose of prospecting this district, was not applied for until May last, and since then several bores have been put down in the Parapara Flat, near Mongonui, under the superintendence of a practical miner recommended by the Kawa Kawa Company. The latest samples forwarded show that a seam of coal, of moderately good quality, has been reached, but the thickness is not yet ascertained. Further expenditure in this district will probably be required for machinery at Kaiou Creek, Wangaroa Harbour, as recommended in my last report, but the application of the grant merely to boring has not been attended with good results, and is not advisable for the future.

Mr. Bell, a resident at Wangaroa, reports the discovery of a seam of superior quality to the north of the harbour, which, from his description, appears to be a continuation of the coal which crops out on the mud flats, referred to in my report of last year.

2. *Kawa Kawa*.—The Coal Company at this place has obtained a grant of £1,000 to assist the boring, so as to determine the best place for sinking shafts. No report has been received of the progress that has been made with this work.

3. *Wangarei*.—A fresh discovery of coal in the vicinity of this excellent harbour has been reported, and steps have been taken to have it thoroughly explored.

4. *Waikato*.—The northern part of this field has been recently taken up by a company, who propose a branch railway to connect with the main southern trunk from Auckland. From the reports appended, the quality of the coal appears to be good for a brown coal, and will no doubt find a ready market in Auckland.

5. *Raglan*.—An altered coal, of very excellent quality, has been discovered and reported to be within easy reach of this harbour. The extension of the Waikato brown coal formation to this district was shown by Captain Hutton's survey in 1866, but there is also an older formation at this place which contains thin irregular seams of coal, and it is not yet certain from which of these formations the samples of coal have been obtained. Specimens of brown iron ore, of very excellent quality, containing 67 per cent. of iron, were also sent with the coal.

WELLINGTON.

6. *Wanganui*.—Samples of brown coal from several localities in the Wanganui district, and also from Rangitikei, have been received, which, though of inferior quality, yet prove the existence of the brown coal formation beneath the marine tertiary series.

NELSON.

7. *Collingwood*.—The chief work at this place during the past year has been the extension of the tunnel for the purpose of exploring the coal measures, which was recommended in last year's report. The tunnel is now in about 390 feet, with favourable indications; and there still remains about 300 feet more before the main coal seam can be cut, which is expected to be accomplished about the end of this year. The total estimated expenditure for this work is about £1,500, of which sum the Government have undertaken to provide one-half, the remainder being borne partly by a grant from the Provincial Government, and partly by the Collingwood Coal Company. The importance of carrying out this work, with the view of exploring coal measures that extend over a very large area, and containing a very valuable description of coal, and in the vicinity of a good shipping place for vessels of