

1880.

NEW ZEALAND.

CONTROL AND INSPECTION OF MINES

(REPORT ON.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of his Excellency.

To the Hon. RICHARD OLIVER, Minister of Mines.

SIR,—

Mines Department, Wellington, 15th July, 1880.

I have the honor to forward for your information the following Report upon the official control and inspection of mines under "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," showing what has been done towards administering the Act, &c., since the date of my last general report of the 18th of July, 1879; with an appendix containing interim and annual reports of inspections of coal mines, with reports of the latest inspections, and statistical tables further referred to in my report.

I have, &c.,

OLIVER WAKEFIELD,
Under Secretary for Mines.

REPORT.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ACT.

It is necessary that I should state, by way of preface, that the bringing into force an Act having for its object the prevention of accidents incident to an industry which perhaps of all others is surrounded by the most dangerous conditions, is a matter requiring careful judgment both with regard to the financial interests of mine owners on the one hand, and the necessity of enforcing provisions to ensure the safety of the mines on the other.

"The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," was brought into force a year and four months ago, and although it had been previously reported that the introduction of this Act would be received with such disfavour throughout the Colony, that I believe former Governments hesitated to deal with the question until the explosion at the Kaitangata coal mine, reported last year occurred, I am glad to be able to state that up to the present time coal mine owners and managers generally have not only accepted the Act as a necessity, but have recognised the benefit which must accrue to themselves and all persons employed in the mines by adopting a system calculated as far as possible to prevent accidents and to ensure the safe working of the mines.*

PROPOSED AMENDED ACT NOT BEING INTRODUCED, INSPECTORS DEFINITELY APPOINTED TO PROCLAIMED MINING DISTRICTS, &c.

As an amended Act was proposed soon after the present Act was brought into force, in my first instructions to Inspectors, I directed them to use their judgment

* This is proved by the fact that in some of the mines where fire-damp has not occurred, safety lamps have been procured against emergency, and in others a second outlet has been finished in cases in which it is provided that this need only be completed within two years of the passing of the Act.