

in the South Island districts for upwards of 100,000 tons of coal raised, but, as Mr. Inspector McLaren states that no accidents have been reported to him for the six mines in his district, yielding an output of nearly 100,000 tons during the year, it follows that the death rate for the whole colony for the year 1880 is one person killed for about 150,000 tons of coal raised, a condition of affairs which no doubt compares favourably with other countries, although of course the occurrence of any fatal accidents at all is much to be deplored.

In last year's report, the fatal accident from fire-damp, by which John Broadfoot lost his life in the Brunner Mine, upon the 3rd of March, 1880, was briefly referred to, and Mr Binns now includes in his present report for the whole year a full account of the inquiry at the inquest into the cause of this accident, with his remarks upon the case.

He also reports the occurrence of an explosion in the Wellington Company's Waimangaroa mine, at Westport, which led to a prosecution (referred to further on), the Magistrate's judgment being given in Mr. Binns's report.

#### PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE ACT. CONCLUSION.

As I have more fully pointed out in former reports, the bringing into force an Act of the character of "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," has been a matter requiring careful judgment with regard to the interests concerned, and the process has, therefore, been less an arbitrary than a steadily progressive one, a great deal having been effected without the necessity for adopting extreme measures the first actual prosecution under the Act having been instituted during the past year by Mr Inspector Binns, in consequence of the explosion at the Wellington Company's Waimangaroa mine, Westport, on the 21st of August last, by which three men were seriously injured, two informations being laid against the manager of the mine and the contractor for getting the coal, for breaches of the Act and special rules in not providing adequate ventilation, and for not working the mine with proper precautions for safety; a conviction being obtained upon one of the informations, the defendants being respectively fined £5, with £7 18s. costs, and £2, with 17s. costs.

These are the first legal proceedings in the form of a prosecution which have been taken under the Act, and they have probably had a salutary effect in warning coal-mine owners and managers to some extent of the penalties to which they are liable for neglecting to see that all precautions for safety are taken, as provided by the Act and rules. It is to be hoped that the necessity for prosecutions may seldom occur, and it is satisfactory to observe that the Inspectors testify to the continued willingness of owners and managers to do all they can to establish precautions against accidents and to comply with the provisions of the Act, but, although the will may, no doubt, be taken for the deed in many cases, it is none the less incumbent upon all persons connected with the mines to be ever mindful of the exceedingly dangerous nature of the industry in which they are engaged, and that it is their imperative duty never to neglect the smallest occasion for taking precautions against danger

OLIVER WAKEFIELD.

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## APPENDIX

### No. 1.

#### INTERIM REPORT UPON INSPECTION OF COAL MINES, NORTH ISLAND DISTRICTS.

Mr. Inspector McLAREN to the UNDER SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines Office, Thames, 20th October, 1880.

I have the honor to report that, towards the end of July, I received a note from Mr. Phillips, the new manager of Miranda Coal Mine, stating that he had given up his position as manager, and that the ownership of the mine had fallen back into the original proprietor's, Mr. Foote's, hands; but that the plan which he had had prepared, at my request, would be open for my inspection at Mr. Dalton's, Civil Engineer's Office, Auckland.

On the 30th July I went to Auckland, with the intention of proceeding to the Miranda Mine, but first called on Mr. Dalton to see the plan, and found that he had drawn the plans of the two levels separately—that is, not with the view of showing how the workings in the one level stood in relation