

Enclosures.

Mr. DALTON to Mr. PHILLIPS.

SIR,—

39 and 40, Insurance Buildings, 2nd August, 1880.

In accordance with your instructions, I have made a survey of the underground workings of Mr. James Foote's mine, known as the Bridgewater Mine, near Mercer, and have the honor to report thereon as follows:—

Upper Workings.—The crown of the gallery is 25 feet 6 inches below the surface of the ground, and the workings themselves I have taken as being of an average height of 17 feet, so that the floor may be taken as 42 feet 6 inches below the surface, and extent, in total length as shown on plan, 596 feet. There has been a total lack of system in these workings, and I found it impossible to make a correct plan in the time at my disposal, owing to the very uneven walls or pillars, which vary in width and angles, leaving the galleries in places 14 feet wide and in others 23 feet wide, rendering the whole more like a series of caverns than anything else. I have, however, shown on the plan hereto annexed the direction of the galleries, and taken them to be of an uniform width of 14 feet.

Lower Workings.—The floor of the lower workings, coloured green, is 58 feet 6 inches from the surface, and the gallery is on an average 8 feet 6 inches high, and mean width about 14 feet; and the length as shown, 532 feet. Taking the height as 8 feet 6 inches should leave 7 feet 6 inches between the two workings, but, inasmuch as (partly owing to the nature of the material) the depth in some places only amounts to about 5 feet. From an inspection of the plan you will perceive that the lower workings are undermining the pillars of the upper, and it would be presumptuous in me to make any remarks thereon to a practical man like yourself.

I will only say a very careful survey should be made of the workings as they stand, with the object of timbering where necessary. I consider the state of things at present very unsatisfactory, and, if persisted in without timbering, of a highly dangerous character.

J Phillips, Esq.

I have, &c.,

WM. JAS. DALTON, C.E.

Mr. J PHILLIPS to Mr. J McLAREN

SIR,—

Manganese Office, Freeman's Bay, Auckland, 4th August, 1880.

I beg to hand you my report of the Miranda Consolidated Coal and Iron Mines, as follows:—As you are aware, I took over the management of these mines on the 1st of June last. On my first inspection I was seriously impressed with the lack of system in the development of the workings. There seemed to me to be no thought for the safety of life or limb, and, in the absence of any plans, sectional or otherwise, I could not then point out all the dangers to which the men were exposed. On my return to Auckland, I at once sent on Mr. J Dalton, C.E., to survey and draw plans of the mine. I herewith enclose his plan of the workings of the mine, together with his report thereon. You will notice that Mr. Dalton has drawn the upper and lower chambers on the same plan. One glance at this plan will suffice to show that my fears were well-founded, and that the men who first opened the mine were totally ignorant of their work. Had I continued the management, I should ere this have done much towards securing the dangerous parts. The management, however, only continued in my hands five weeks ending 5th July

J McLaren, Esq., Mining Inspector, Grahamstown.

I have, &c.,

JNO. PHILLIPS.

SIR,—

Auckland, 16th September.

I have been trying for the last week or two for a surveyor to survey the Miranda Coal Mine. I have procured Mr. Lowe to go to the mine next Monday with me, as he told me he had laid off one of the Waikato mines.

Mr. McLaren, Inspector of Mines.

I remain, &c.,

(For J FOOTE,) C. H.*

No. 2.

ANNUAL REPORT UPON INSPECTION OF COAL MINES, NORTH ISLAND DISTRICTS.

Mr. Inspector McLAREN to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,—

Inspector of Mines Office, Thames, 6th May, 1881.

I have the honor to forward report on the coal mines situated within my districts, Kawakawa and Waikato, for the year ending 31st December, 1880. As I have visited the mines since that date, my report is brought up to the 31st March, 1881, the same as last year.

It is pleasing to note that there has been a gradual improvement going on in the system of working and ventilating the mines, more especially the chief collieries. To have enforced large alterations on the introduction of the Act would have been arbitrary and, in some cases, ruinous. It was better, therefore, to get amendments gradually made, as old ground was worked out and new ground opened. Much greater care and watchfulness is employed in guarding the safety of the men, and enforcing the rules for that purpose. As a proof this, there has not been a single accident of any kind reported to me since the date of my last yearly report, 31st March, 1880. This speaks well, more especially as the output from the mines for year ending 31st December, 1880, is nearly one-quarter greater than the previous year, being 75,070 tons in 1879, and 96,345½ tons in 1880.

In regard to the important clause 10, Part III., of the Act, "That within two years there shall be made and completed at least two distinct openings to the surface," all the mines have double openings, and in some cases three and four outlets to the surface.

* It will be seen from the subsequent reports of Messrs. McLaren and Cox that this mine has since been closed.