

may see others—no more competent than themselves—preferred, as holding Government certificates, which, so far as anyone is able to judge, seems to be obtainable now in some of the districts of Great Britain by any one desiring it.

A description of the conditions of the various collieries (as regards the Act) is given below.

#### WEST WANGANUI DISTRICT.

1. *Wallsend Colliery, Collingwood*.—This is the old Parapara Coal Mine. As it requires an expenditure of time which I have not as yet been able to devote to it, this colliery has not been visited. I was at Nelson in November, *en route* for Collingwood, but finding that more than a fortnight would probably be required, I was compelled to leave it till another time. Very little is being done, half the men having been dismissed at the new year.

#### PELORUS DISTRICT.

2 and 3. *Picton Coal Mines*.—Two parties have been prospecting here, and have got coal. Several shafts which they sank are duly fenced or covered.

#### WESTPORT DISTRICT.

4. *Mokihini Coal Mine* has only recently commenced. Two shafts require fencing; the drive is in good order. I have supplied the owner with a draft set of special rules.

5. *Wellington Coal Company's Waimangaroa Coal Mine*.—This mine was carelessly worked, and is now fortunately closed. An explosion took place; full particulars of which, with the resulting prosecution of the manager, will be found in this report. The Wellington Coal Company has now merged into the Koranui, which ought soon to be putting out coal.

6. *Westport Colliery Company's Banbury Mine* appeared last year as the Fisher Mine. This colliery is now in regular work, the surface inclines being completed. The Act is carefully observed. The only drawback is in the ventilation, which, owing to meteorological causes, frequently reverses; in the absence of gas, this is merely an inconvenience, on account of powder-smoke, and Mr. Denniston projects artificial ventilation, which will do away with any cause of complaint. The roof, in places, is rendered bad by the percolation of surface water, but timber is used unsparingly.

7. *Energetic Coal Mine, Reefton*, is in good order. The air is good; a weekly report is kept; and the workings are well timbered.

8. *Golden Treasure Coal Mine, Reefton*.—Merely a straight drive, a few yards in, worked for the boilers. Act not yet observed.

9. *Lankey's Gully Coal Mine* is in better order than when last reported on, the roof having been supported by packs. Act not observed.

10. *Gulline's Coal Mine, Reefton*, is not working, and has not been visited since my last report.

11. *Newcastle Coal Mine, Reefton*.—Very little is done here. The pit is in good order, but the Act disregarded.

12. *Dudley Coal Mine, Reefton*.—The remarks on No. 11 apply equally here.

13. *Golden Fleece Extended Coal Mine, Reefton*.—The old mine has been abandoned, and a new one, in a very thick seam of coal, apparently faulted, was just commenced. The Act was not attended to.

14 and 15. *Dugan's and Burke's Coal Mines, Boatman's*.—Not visited since last report.

16. *Oriental Coal Mine, Reefton* ("Union Company's" of last report.)—Nothing is being done just now at this mine, as it is situated in one of the wildest parts of a rough district, and is worked only for a quartz-crushing machine.

17. *Charleston Coal Mine* is worked open-cast, and has not been visited.

18. *Brunner Coal Mine, Greymouth*.—This mine requires very careful management just now. Since my last report, work has been carried on to the rise, and artificial ventilation is much required. Preparations are being made for erecting a 16-foot fan at the entrance, a few chains above the brickshed. The workings are now, to a great extent, in the broken, and with a thick seam of tender coal, this is necessarily a dangerous operation. The Act seems to be observed, the mine being examined before the men enter. The output of large coal was 27,981 tons; of nuts, 2,549 tons; of slack for coke, say, 1,975 tons: making a total of 32,505 tons of coal, in addition to 58,349 fire-bricks, and 25 tons fire-clay. An account of the fatal explosion in this mine will be found in its proper place.

19. *Coalpit-Heath Colliery* continues to be carefully managed. The ventilation is excellent. On September 1st it measured 6,536 cubic feet per minute at the far end of the main level, and 17,374 in the main return; or more than  $5\frac{1}{2}$  times my last report. On December 16th, only 11,650; but this is ample, as the air is well distributed. The mine is carefully examined every morning, and a report is written. With one exception (weekly report on machinery,) the Act is kept. A small outburst of gas has occurred, and, as these are very dangerous, great care must be exercised. There are two outlets from the workings.

#### GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

20. *Greymouth Wallsend Colliery* has not yet been put in working order. The water is about 650 feet deep in the shaft.

21. *Greymouth Wallsend, No. 2*.—This is the original shaft, and coal is now being raised from it. There were no sliding gates on the winding shaft; but these are now on, Mr. Brown informs me. The mine is free from gas, and there are two outlets. The ventilation is good, and measured 4,095 cubic feet per minute when first tried on December 18th. By judicious stoking, and sheltering the fire from the rain I made it 10,150, showing that there is ample power. Headings are being driven to the dip for the purpose of communicating with the deep shaft.