

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

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, 3rd June, 1884.

I have the honour to forward statistics for the coal mines within my districts, for the year ending the 31st December, 1883. As I recently visited these mines, I bring my report up to date.

Since my last yearly report I have only one accident to record. It occurred to a miner named John Wilson on the 8th February last, at the Kamo Mine. It appears he was working in the old or No. 1 dip, where the roof has generally been very bad: the manager, therefore, had it close-timbered up to the face, so close that the man could hardly use his pick; but this close-timbering, which was done to prevent accident, was in this case the cause. A small piece came from the roof and face on to his shoulder; he jumped back to clear it, but, the prop behind preventing this, he fell sideways and broke his leg above the ankle. It was not the small piece that came away, but the awkward position in which he fell, that snapped the bone.

The total output of coal from all the mines is slightly less than the previous year, being 92,761 tons 10cwt., against 96,151 tons 10cwt. in 1882.

1. *Taupiri Colliery, Huntly*.—I visited this mine on the 17th of May, and found the ventilation much improved, through the manager, Mr. Collins, having sunk a fresh air-shaft. The workings were generally in good order, and every care appears to be taken for the safety of men, the company having now wisely granted Mr. Collins an underviewer, which was a very necessary thing to do where so many men are employed. The timber dams that were constructed in the three bords off the west leading to keep out the drift from under the swamp, which had broken in in November last, I found were acting well, and there is no appearance of further danger from that quarter: the hole made from the surface, where the ground had caved in, has been filled in with clay, rendering it still more safe. There is no intention at present to try and win coal from under the swamp towards the river. The machinery is in good order: the hauling-engine is a new one of 12 horse-power nominal working up to 18 horse-power; the pumping-engine has been put in good repair, new valves and seatings having been fitted in. The output from this mine continues to steadily increase: in 1882 it was 25,381 tons; last year, 33,289 tons 10cwt.

2. *Waikato Colliery, near Huntly*.—I visited this mine on the 16th May and found the workings in good order; the ventilation was also good. A well-finished plan of the mine and old workings has just been completed from a fresh survey, which appears to have been carefully and accurately made. An improvement has been made in the mode of filling the barges on the river. Instead of throwing the coal through a shoot from a height into them, a steam crane has been erected, which lifts the mine trucks off the wheel frame into the barges, which are conveyed to Mercer to be tipped into the railway boxes for conveyance to Auckland. This saves handling and, as far as possible, prevents the coal from being broken small, which is very necessary with coal of such a friable nature.

3. *Whauwhau Colliery, near Whangarei*.—The output of this mine has increased from 4,800 tons in 1882 to 6,743 tons in 1883. With the view of having a still larger output a self-acting incline is being constructed in the mine, extending from near the end of the main tunnel through the fault to the rise. The length of this incline is 320ft., and will greatly facilitate and cheapen the output. At the date of my visit (22nd May) the air in this new portion of the mine was far from being good, but I expect this will be remedied when the arrangements in progress are completed. The workings in the older portions are in good order, and the ventilation fairly good.

4. *Kamo Colliery, near Whangarei*.—The new shaft has been completed, and the chambers cut and timbered, but little has as yet been done towards driving the levels. Until the siding from the railway is constructed it will not be profitable to place coal in the market from this shaft. The depth of this shaft, which only goes down to the top seam, is 221ft.; its size, 15ft. x 6ft., divided into three compartments, two for hauling or raising coal, and one for pumping: it is strongly timbered throughout. The poppet-heads are 57ft. in height, which will give ample room for hoppers, screens, &c. Steam is obtained from two Cornish boilers, each 25ft. 6in. x 6ft. 6in. The pumping-gear is driven by a 12-in. cylinder engine, having a 2ft. 6in. stroke: the pump stroke can be varied from 3ft. to 7ft.; the pumping barrel is 10in. in diameter; the winding engine is 18in. in diameter, having a 3ft. stroke; the ropes are flat hemp, passing over 6ft. pulleys at the poppet-heads; the cages are hooded, and work in the shaft with three guides. At the date of my visit (21st May) all the output was from the new or No. 2 dip: the workings there were safe, but the ventilation was far from being good; the tangye pump was, however, not working at the time, and the manager assures me that when working the air is quite different, which, from the steam pipes leading to it being placed down the upcast-shaft, is sure to be the case.

5. *Kawakawa Colliery, Bay of Islands*.—I visited this mine on the 28th and 29th May. There is nothing special or new to report in regard to it. A little coal is being won from the dip, but the principal output is from that part of the mine lying towards what is known by the name of "Moody's outcrop:" towards this, from No. 2 level, a self-acting incline tramway has been constructed, 300ft. in length. On account of the great distance of this part of the mine from the