

furnace upcast, great difficulty was found in ventilating it, the air being generally very bad. To cure this Mr. Moody (the manager) sunk an air-shaft 120ft. deep on to the coal, with good effect, the air now being nearly all that could be desired; in one or two places, however, it required a little guiding toward the faces where the men were working. The roof is very bad in several places in this part of the mine, being broken and jointy, but every care is being taken to prevent accident by close-timbering. All other working parts of the mine are in good order.

Since last year there have been no new mines opened up, but coal has been found and prospecting operations are now being carried on in several places.

It was reported that operations were about to be resumed at the Miranda Mine (late Foot's), but on inquiry I found the statement to be premature. On the private property adjoining that of the Miranda Mine boring operations have been going on for some time, but I have not heard the result. Coal has also been found on private property at Hunua, near Papakura, which is now being prospected. Coal has also been found on, I believe, Native land at Mokau, on the West Coast; also on Government land on the Ohinemuri Gold Field, between Paeroa and Mackaytown, near the foot of the range. This coal was found as far back as 1875, but till now nothing has been done to test it. A number of shafts have recently been sunk and borings made, proving, I understand, there are three seams: two of these are small, but the third is about 5ft. thick. This (brown) coal has been tested by Mr. Pond, analyst, Auckland, who gives the following analysis: Fixed carbon, 45.03; hydrocarbon, 30.57; water, 17.3; ash, 7.1; total, 100. As this sample is taken from the near crop, it may fairly be expected that when driven into the seam will not only improve in thickness but also in quality, as do beds of a similar nature elsewhere.

I have, &c.,

JAMES M. McLAREN,  
Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.

## No. 2.

EXTRACT FROM MR. BINNS'S ANNUAL REPORT UPON INSPECTION OF COAL MINES, MIDDLE ISLAND DISTRICTS.

Mr. Inspector BINNS, F.G.S., to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 9th June, 1884.

I have the honour, in accordance with section 40 of "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," to make the following report, for the information of His Excellency the Governor:—

During the year 1883, with the exception of six days of the ordinary Government holidays, and six day's illness in June, the whole of my time has been occupied in carrying out the duties incident to my position as Inspector under the above Act, and under "The Westland and Nelson Coal Fields Administration Act, 1877." Attached to the report are tables of statistics and accidents. With regard to the former, my thanks are due to those managers and owners who have assisted me with particulars of output, &c.; at the same time, I may remark that there is no statutory obligation to send these particulars, and it is often difficult to obtain them—in fact, some output returns are entirely excluded from the table, on account of the failure of managers to send them, even after repeated application.

The following is a *résumé* of the work done in connection with each mine—or, at least, so much as is necessary for a report of this nature. Many of the mines have been more fully reported on during the year, and these reports are among the records of the department.

### PELORUS AND WEST WANGANUI DISTRICTS.

6 to 9. *Picton and Collingwood Mines.*—These have not been visited by me for some considerable time. As they are so near the head-quarters of the department Mr. Cox undertook the work.

### WESTPORT DISTRICT.

10. *Koramui Coal Mine, Westport.*—In 1882 I had to note that this company's prospecting works were in a backward condition, and a similar remark was made last year. I have now to repeat it. On the 24th ultimo, when I visited the mine, the coal generally was crushed and disturbed. That there is good coal on the lease is an accepted fact, though I have not had an opportunity of seeing it: but the company seem a very long time in reaching it. The mine has been visited three times since my last report. On the 15th September, 1883, Mr. Ferguson was in charge, and the Act appeared to be observed: only that, on account of a breakage on the incline, boys were employed after 2 p.m., which was not lawful, as the day was Saturday. Special and general rules were exhibited, and boys registered. On the 11th January, 1884, Mr. Henry Hughes was in charge, with Mr. W. McMurray as mine manager. No Act was observed, but, in view of the change of management, this was to a certain extent to be excused. An air-shaft was being sunk. Last year I ventured to express an opinion that the ordinary endless-rope system would be better than the system then being tried for lowering coal. Mr. Hughes has altered the arrangements now, and has an endless-rope plant at work, in five lifts, the longest of which is 59 chains. The maximum gradient is 1 in  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , and the average one in  $5\frac{1}{4}$ . The inclines, which are all self-acting, work very well, but at present it is necessary to stop each length for every tub that passes the terminus, and this causes great delay. No doubt Mr. Hughes will soon overcome this little difficulty. On the 12th February, 1884, I sent a copy of the Act, and wrote requesting attention to the regulations affecting the employment of children and young persons, and also to the section requiring promulgation of special rules. I was somewhat surprised, therefore, on Saturday, the 24th ultimo, to find boys employed after 2 p.m., and to learn that it was a regular practice; also not to see special rules exhibited. Mr. Hughes arranged to dismiss the boys, of whom there are only three.