

METHODS OF WORKING.

Worked by adit—Horse-power used, 7; self-acting inclines, 1; engine-planes, 9; hand-power, 36	...	...	...	...	...	...	53
Openworked	...	...	...	...	...	...	27
Prospecting	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Worked by shaft—Steam-power used, 6; horse-power, 5...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
Closed	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	94

This shows that there are five more mines worked by steam-engines than in 1882.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE J. BINNS,

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.

Inspector of Mines.

No. 3.

REPORT UPON INSPECTION OF COAL MINES, SOUTH ISLAND.

Mr. Inspector Cox, F.G.S., to the UNDER-SECRETARY FOR MINES.

SIR,—

Mines Department, Wellington, 31st January, 1884.

I have the honour to inform you that I have visited the more important of the Malvern Hills mines, and herewith submit my report on the same.

Homebush Colliery.—I visited this mine on the 11th December, 1883, and found the workings standing well throughout, and the ventilation satisfactory. The fault which I alluded to in my report of last year has now been struck in the main level, and beyond it the seam is much mixed with stone; this disturbance is probably only local, and they will shortly be in good coal again. A number of pillars have been drawn since I last visited the mine, and a considerable area is now worked out, while the work of drawing the pillars still progresses.

Springfield Colliery.—This mine was visited on the 12th December, and was found to be generally in good order, Captain Parker being in charge. The workings are now carried on entirely to the dip of the main shaft, and the output is comparatively small, owing to the number of men which can be employed. All the workings were standing well, and timber is well and carefully put in, although I had to call attention in one or two cases to slabs which required renewing. The provisions of the Act are carefully observed, and the ventilation was as good as could be expected, when one shaft is used for pumping, drawing, and ventilating purposes. It is proposed to sink another shaft to the dip shortly, and a bore-hole is now being put down on the flat to prove the existence and character of the coal there.

Wilson's Colliery (Whitecliffs), which is still under the management of Mr. W. Smart, is in good order, but the workings are very small. Two seams of coal, about five feet apart, are being worked, and these are connected at places by narrow cross-cuts. The mine is well timbered throughout, and the ventilation was good. A double drive, bratticed, is being put down to work the seams to a greater depth, but this had only just been commenced. No plan of the workings exists as yet, but the requisite report-books are kept.

Hart's Colliery.—I visited this mine on the 26th October, and again on the 10th December, and found it in fairly good order, and a fair current of air passing. The coal is very easily got, and timber is used unsparingly, although not always of the best quality, to judge by the incessant repairs which are necessary. In the dip drive the floor is continually swelling, and entails a heavy expense on the mine to keep the road in repair. A cross-drive towards the lower seam of black coal is being driven, and on the day of my visit a thin seam had been struck, which, however, the manager, Mr Ekberg, did not think was the true seam. An accident has happened to a man in this mine from a truck getting away on the incline, which has already been reported on by Mr Binns.

I have, &c.,

S. HERBERT COX,

The Under-Secretary for Mines, Wellington.

Inspector of Mines.

Mr. Inspector Cox, F.G.S., to the UNDER-SECRETARY FOR MINES.

SIR,—

Mines Department, Wellington, 2nd April, 1884.

I have the honour to inform you that I have inspected the more important collieries at Nelson, the West Coast, and Otago, and herewith submit my report on the same.

Picton Colliery.—I visited this mine on the 6th February, and found that three shafts had been sunk and drives put in to intersect the country in various directions, all of which, however, end at the same point, viz., the first shaft sunk, from the bottom of which a borehole was put down on coal. There are two seams of coal discovered in the mine up to the present time, neither of which promise to be of any great extent. One of these rests hard against the slate in places, and at others is interstratified with shales; while the upper seam, to which most attention has been paid, is interstratified with shales: both seams are cut in a cross drive from No. 2 shaft. In the main shaft a calcareous conglomerate was struck at the bottom, and a drive was commenced to go through it, but has since been abandoned, and water is now standing at the bottom of the shaft. A drive has been put in from a higher level, which cut the coal. In character the seams are exceedingly patchy, the coal in several cases being seen to pinch out from 4ft. or 5ft. to less than a foot in the width of a drive, while in other cases, although the width of the seam is constant, it will be coal at the top of the drive and nothing but shale at the bottom. There are, however, a few hundred tons of coal available, and works are being undertaken to get this at once. At the time of my visit all the works were standing well, and with the exception of a few details, which are to be amended, the Act