

30,426 tons; Blackball, 27,060 tons; Allandale, 19,442 tons; Walton Park, 19,282 tons; Shag Point, 15,082 tons; Taupiri Reserve, 13,877 tons; Kiripaka, 13,655 tons; Hakanui, 12,690 tons. The output from each of the other mines in the colony being under 12,000 tons.

Two new mines are being opened up: one at Granity Creek, belonging to the Westport Company; and the other at Coal Creek, belonging to the Greymouth-Point Elizabeth Railway and Coal Company. These mines, when opened up, will be capable of supplying a large quantity of coal. The Blackball Mine is now in fair working order, and is capable of a considerable output should the demand for coal increase. The available coal in the Brunner Mine is now ascertained, from the prospecting operations which were carried on last year, to be confined to a semi-circular area. The thinning of the coal takes place at different parts, and the strata overlying the coal at the different points indicate that a considerable disturbance, or crushing action, has at one time taken place, and that a seam of sufficient thickness, if found, must be a considerable distance further back, towards the Coal Creek lease. It is expected that, unless coal is found in other parts of the Brunner lease, any large output from this mine can only be expected to last for about a couple of years.

#### EARNINGS OF THE COAL-MINERS.

The earnings of the coal-miners cannot be accurately ascertained, for the reason that in the principal mines the employment is intermittent, the output at the mines being dependent on vessels to take away the coal. The storage at the large mines is comparatively small in proportion to the number of men employed. When they can be fully employed the men earn high wages; but sometimes they are off work for two and three days a week. If there was sufficient storage at the mines, a less number of miners would be sufficient to produce coal to supply the demand, but without storage this cannot be done, as vessels coming into the ports of Westport and Greymouth require to be loaded as fast as possible.

In former years the rate of computation has been based on a labour cost of 6s. per ton produced—that is, the cost of hewing, trucking, and haulage; and, taking into consideration the amount of dead-work which has to be done in every mine, this seems a fair basis of computation. The output last year being 719,546 tons, and 1,899 men being employed in connection with the mines, it would make the average earnings of the miners £113 13s. 5d. a man per annum, or about £2 3s. 9d. per week.

#### ACCIDENTS IN COAL-MINES.

I have to regret to state that, notwithstanding the strict supervision enforced by legislation for the security of the workmen employed in mines, it seems almost impossible to attain an immunity from accidents. Last year five fatal accidents occurred, and in each instance no blame could be attributed to any one. No better system of supervision can be exercised than by the workmen themselves, as they are daily in the different working-faces, and if they see the slightest relaxation of their employers in providing for their health and safety, on their acquainting the Inspector of Mines, it is the duty of that officer to act upon the information given him, and to see that any just cause of complaint in regard to safety is immediately attended to.

#### METALLIFEROUS MINING.

Although there are a considerable variety of minerals in the colony, very little has been yet done to develop them. Nearly all our attention has been given to gold, silver, and coal. In the northern portion of the Auckland District a small quantity of manganese-ore is shipped every year, but the low price of this mineral will only permit it to be worked at a profit when the deposit is found close to the sea-board, where it can be loaded into vessels direct. During the last year 534 tons were exported, having a value of £1,156, which is equal to about £2 3s. 3d. per ton.