

been stored in a shed close to the boiler; they are not broken or cracked in any way. Some of the small parts were removed to a shed at Corby's, the balance being in the beach shed. Both are now, unfortunately, roofless, and the machinery is exposed to the weather. Davits, funnel, shafts, propeller-blades, and parts of the engine-room fittings are laying on the beach close to the engine-shed.

The District Engineer claimed the shed erected by the company at Corby's, and stripped the iron off the roof; he also claimed the contents, and had some of them removed. I claim them as the property of the company, and will dispose of them along with the engines and boiler; they are of no use in connection with the working of the mine. Before submitting them for sale by public auction arrangements will have to be made with the Railway Department to run some of the six-wheeled wagons (now being used on the Cape Foulwind line) to Mokihinui to load the boiler and heavy parts of the machinery for conveyance to Westport, and a price fixed for the same.

Attached is an inventory of the plant in and about the mine.

Wellington, 31st December, 1898.

W. SIMPSON,
Official Liquidator.

GENTLEMEN,—

Wellington, 1st December, 1896.

In accordance with your instructions, I have examined your Mokihinui Coal-mine and Coalfield, and beg to submit the following report:—

Geology.

As the geology of the field has been exhaustively treated by Sir James Hector, F.R.S., Director of the Geological Survey, and Mr. Alexander McKay, Geologist to the Mining Department, both of whom have expressed opinions of the great importance of your property, it will be needless for me to deal with this part of the subject. I will, therefore, endeavour to lay before you the economic value of your coalfield.

Topographical Features, &c.

The coalfield naturally divides itself into two parts—viz., the western and the eastern.

Western Portion.—About 4 chains above the bins a borehole has been put down, which proved the coal-seam to be about 4 ft. thick; between this and the Cardiff boundary there are about 100 acres of country in which it is probable that a good quantity of coal of fair quality may be won. This could be proved, should the coal not be affected by the granite, by a borehole, which it would be well to make before any work is done in this part, in order to determine the thickness of the seam. I am informed that the Cardiff workings are being driven in this direction, and that the coal they are working is fairly coherent. Passing along Cooper's track I found the country very much broken, and it is probable that the strata are dislocated in many places between the workings driven under the direction of Mr. Straw and your westerly boundary. In Chasm Creek the coal-measures have been cut out by the granite. I inspected an outcrop of coal in this district. I found it to be hard and of good quality, but it thinned out to the south, and was cut out or thrown down to the north. Mr. Grant informed me that he had sunk near this place, and after going through 6 ft. of sandstone he came upon a seam of coal 10 ft. thick, of excellent quality. As the outcrop is only exposed for a short distance, I could not form any opinion as to its extension.

Eastern Portion.—After leaving the steep ground immediately above the Hut level, I found the surface to consist of table-land to a considerable extent north, south, and south-east. It is probable that in this part of your lease, which comprises the principal portion of it, the coal-measures will be found in a much less disturbed state than in the western portion. Mr. Hartley informed me that he had found outcrops of coal on the Mokihinui River, and the southernmost borehole that had been put down pierced a coal-seam 14 ft. thick, proving that the Hut Seam is continuous in a great portion of your coalfield.

Coal-workings.

I could not inspect the workings, driven in a great part under the direction of Mr. Straw, owing to their being filled with black-damp. I examined those recently worked by Mr. Alexander, and regret to report that I found the coal-seam mixed with large boulders and bands of clay, and the coal of a friable character. I would not recommend that any further workings be executed at present in this part of your property, owing to the friability of the coal and the dislocation of the strata, coupled with the large number of faults. It has been a great surprise to me that the workings have been continued so long in this portion of your coalfield.

I examined your workings in the Hut Seam. I found a small quantity of inflammable gas in the face of the heading near a fault, but it could easily be diluted by putting in wood stoppings in the stentons, stowing refuse behind them, enlarging the return airway in a few places, and keeping the brattice well forward. I found the coal of very good quality, easily worked, but wanting in coherence. The upper seam has been proved at the farthest point. It is here about 6 ft. high. I had it tested, and it made a strong bright fire and very little ash, but its texture is the same as the lower seam. As far as the present workings have extended the coal appears to have been crushed. I would therefore recommend that two exploring drifts be driven in a north-east direction in the Hut Seam, in order to ascertain whether or not the coal is of a harder nature under the table-land than in the present disturbed ground. Assuming that the coal becomes sufficiently hard as to be suitable for household purposes, I beg to suggest that it be divided into the following classes: House coal (Wallsend), steam (Hartley), unscreened (bunkers, &c.), gas, nut, pea, smithy, small, and duff.