

ANNEXURE A.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF COAL-MINES.

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (R. H. SCHÖEN, INSPECTOR OF COAL-MINES).

The following is my report on the working of coal-mines in the Northern Inspection District for the year ended 31st December, 1942:—

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS OF EACH COLLIERY FOR THE YEAR 1942.

North Auckland District.

Kamo Colliery.—Slant Heading Section, No. 3 Mine: The main drive was not extended during the year, but development of the coal area to the north-east was continued by advancing the face of the slant heading 10 chains to a distance of 28 chains from the main dip. With the exception of about 40 ft. of faulty country, this extension was in coal which is of good quality and 8 ft. thick at the face. The connection of this heading to the main drive early in the year allowed a considerable shortening of haulage and the release of two winches for other work.

Panel development to right and left of the main slant headings has been continued, no large faults being met with. Ventilation has been maintained by the erection of concrete stoppings between intake and return as the main slant heading proceeds.

No. 2 West Heading Section: A sub lease has been arranged with British Standard Portland Cement, Ltd., and development headings have been driven some eight chains over their boundary in a south-west direction in good quality coal 7 ft. to 12 ft. thick. The headings are now nearing the Railway Reserve, and application has been made to drive two headings across it to work the area to the west of the railway. The coal is dipping slightly towards the west, and several small intrusions have been met with in workings to the north-west of these headings.

No. 4 Mine: Work has been confined to cutting up into pillars a small area of coal under residential property adjacent to Hall and Meldrum Streets and also the area abandoned in May by the Whangarei Collieries, this area being much faulted and the coal patchy. Good-quality coal amounting to 13,520 tons was won from this mine section during the year.

Waro Colliery.—The main heading is standing at a distance of 57 chains from the mine entrance, the cover at this point being 475 ft. Here a 5 ft. upthrow fault was crossed and the seam followed for 2 chains. The coal is 4 ft. 3 in. thick at the face and dipping at 1 in 5.

To the east of the main drive the seam rises sharply and is much interrupted by rolls and small faults. Within 5 chains to 6 chains it thins in this direction to 3 ft. 6 in. or less.

Nos. 1 and 2 slope dips, to the west of the main drive, both had inrushes of water from fissures in the limestone roof at about 8 chains and 6 chains respectively from the main drive. No. 3 slope dip has also struck faulty ground at about 5½ chains, but with, so far, no extra water. The seam on this side of the main drive is 5 ft. thick.

The strip of workable coal being followed in the mine is therefore little more than 12 chains wide, and thin, and there seems no prospect of economic development either west or east of the main drive.

The country is heavily watered and pumping and power costs are considerable. A large turbine pump installed in December of this year has not proved successful, and has had to be combined with another pump in order to handle the inflow to the surface in one stage. This pump is operated twenty hours daily.

Owing to the long strip of coal being worked, haulage is slow and expensive, while ventilation difficulties due to the low seam and long airways are increased by high humidity, bad roof, and the fact that fully one-third of the air inflow short-circuits through fissures in the limestone cover before reaching the workings.

Orr and Party (Tauranga Block).—This party were working pillars left by the Northern Co. in the upper seam. All available coal was extracted by the end of March and the mine abandoned.

Ruatangata Colliery (Whangarei Collieries, Ltd.).—Pillar-extraction to the east of the main drive was completed early in May. As development to the west was not possible owing to the thin seam and faulty conditions, the mine was sealed and abandoned as from 15th May.

Whareora Colliery (Pollock and Party).—The small area of coal developed by this party was worked out and the mine was abandoned as from 13th April.

Avoca Opencast Coal-mine (S. G. Foot).—Work ceased at this mine in January, the owner having joined the military forces.

Ketenikau Mine (Pollock and Party).—Three men are employed reopening old workings of the original Whangarei Coal-mining Co. at Three-mile Bush, Kamo. An access road has been formed, and portion of the old workings dewatered and ventilated. The seam is 4 ft. thick and of fair quality.

Kiripuka Fireclay-mine (Ngunguru Fireclay and Coal Co., Ltd.).—Early in the year operations were resumed at this mine, which had previously been worked intermittently as a quarry. A seam of good fireclay 10 ft. thick is now mined owing to the increase in thickness of the overburden, and good results have been obtained. Four men are employed, and the product is shipped to Auckland.

Waikato District.

Rotowaro Collieries (Taupiri Coal-mines, Ltd.).—No. 1 Mine: Pillar-extraction has continued throughout the year in the New Haulage No. 4 main rope section (top seam).

In Callaghan's Dip section (bottom seam) the main headings have been advanced some 12 chains in a southerly direction. A rising grade, in this direction, of 1 in 12 greatly assists the endless-rope haulage, which throughout the year has been kept up to the main heading face.

Owing to shortage of miners, No. 2 panel east was temporarily sealed in October, while development of No. 3 panel has continued throughout the year, and development of No. 4 panel is well forward. Late in the year two panel headings were started to the west.

Coal-cutting machines were reintroduced into the section in August. As this is a gassy section, special conditions as regards the periodic examination by means of a CH₄ detector of the places to be cut were imposed by the Mines Department.

Provision for future pumping from this section has been made by the construction of a large sump. A turbine pump has been ordered for this task, and two bores have been completed to carry electric cables and pump column from the surface.

No. 3 Mine (Bottom Seam): Pillar-extraction has continued throughout the year in Brown's section, Green's Jig, and Wilkie's Dip, while in B section pillar-extraction was commenced early in the year.

No. 4 Mine: Only a few pillars remain in this mine on either side of the dip. At the end of the year only two pairs of miners were working.

Alison No. 1 Mine: Pillar-extraction has continued throughout the year in No. 1 panel and in Nos. 1 and 2 dips. In No. 2 dip a large quantity of coal is being won from the top seam by regrading the roads over the fallen stone band between the seams after extraction of the bottom seam. The top seam varies between 12 ft. and 15 ft. thick, and a good percentage is being obtained.

Development of 1A panel has continued steadily and also of an area to the north-east of 1A. The area to the west of No. 2 panel, which was commenced early in the year, is being developed on the rise side of fault met with in No. 2 panel.

Alison No. 2 Mine: The stone drive commenced in February reached the coal-seam in May, and development was commenced. Two headings have been advanced 7 chains to the north-west towards the Alison No. 1 Mine and are stopped, leaving a 2-chain barrier against the No. 1 dip workings.

Two more headings have been started on a dip grade of 1 in 5 to the north-east under Rotowaro Township to open up the main coal area.