

cessful in finding the coal. The seam is 8 ft. thick where intersected, but the manager intends to only take out 6 ft. 6 in. for a time. Four men are employed, and the output of coal for the year was 1,049½ tons, an increase of 81½ tons on that obtained the previous year.

Kamo Mine has ceased working.

Whauwhau has ceased working.

NGUNGURU.

Ngunguru Mine.—This company's operations were directed to taking out pillars to the rise and dip, there being only one bord carried forward in solid coal when the mine was inspected on the 16th November last. The Ngunguru Coal Company (Limited), through causes best known to themselves, found it necessary to put the company into liquidation in the early part of the year, and it is now being carried on by Mr. Tankard on behalf of a company. The mine was inspected three times during the year. The ventilation was good and the workings safe, although one fatal accident occurred to a miner named Alexander Scott whilst he was in the act of drawing out props, as already reported. There has always been abundance of timber kept on the mine, to be used as required. Thirty-nine men have been employed on this mine for the greater part of the year, and the output of coal was 13,004 tons, a decrease of 2,836 tons as compared with that of the previous year.

Kiripaka Mine (Callaghan's).—This is a new mine, and is worked by a small syndicate, who are pushing on with the work as fast as their circumstances will allow. The seam of coal where operated on is 20 ft. thick and of fair quality, but they have only been working on the coal for the last six months, and consequently there has not been a large amount of work done on it yet, more especially as only six men have been employed in the mine and one on the surface. The operations in the mine are being carried on under the management of Mr. George Climo, who was granted a permit in terms of section 21 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891." The output of coal to the end of the year was 1,609 tons.

WAIKATO.

Taupiri Coal Company (Limited).—In the early part of the year the Waikato, Taupiri Extended, Taupiri Reserve, and Ralph's Taupiri Coal Companies were reconstructed and formed into a company called the Taupiri Coal Company (Limited). The shareholders no doubt benefit by the change, a considerable saving having been effected, three mine-managers, three legal managers' offices, and other expenses connected with the working of three of the companies having been dispensed with, whilst the supply of coal to meet the demand has not been interrupted. The new company at once stopped all work in the Waikato Mine, and operations in the Taupiri Reserve Mine were also stopped for a time, but this mine was again started for the purpose of producing a certain amount of coal to comply with the terms of the lease. The work has been concentrated in obtaining coal to meet the demand from the Taupiri section and Ralph's Taupiri Mine, from which a large amount of good coal is forthcoming. The most important work in Ralph's Taupiri section has been the sinking of the dip a distance of 14 chains, from which two levels have been driven off, and beyond advancing the levels and headings in the Taupiri Extended section no new work of any importance has been carried out. The seam of coal in the four sections of this company's mine varies from 16 ft. to 65 ft. in thickness, but, as the coal worked is either under the lakes or river, or in close proximity to them, large pillars have to be left in, more especially as the covering of the seam is mostly composed of running sand. As the bords are, as a rule, carried forward 16 ft. in width, and from 10 ft. to 24 ft. in height, a considerable quantity of coal is left in, and therefore a large area is traversed for a small quantity of coal in comparison to the thickness of the seam.

There have been 185 men employed in this company's mine, and the output of coal has been 68,929 tons, this being a decrease of 1,270 tons from the four mines last year.

Bombay Mine.—Stopped.

MOKAU.

Mokau Mine.—This mine has been steadily worked during the year by Messrs. Stubbs and Co., of Waitara, who purchased the s.s. "Douglas" to convey the coal from the mine to Waitara and New Plymouth. The mine being situated up the Mokau River about twenty miles, a considerable amount of time is lost by the boats getting up and down the river with the tides. The bar at the mouth of the river causes a good deal of uncertainty to boats getting in and out, and therefore there is some difficulty in keeping the market regularly supplied with the coal. The operations in the mine during the year have been principally confined to opening up a block of coal to the north-east of the old workings, which have now been practically cut off from the present workings. The coal in the bords now carried forward will average 7 ft. 6 in. in thickness, and appears to be improving as it is opened up, and the band of stone in the centre is getting thinner. William Tattley, jun., resigned the position of mine-manager in the month of December, and Robert Cherrie was appointed in his place. A good deal of necessary work in connection with the ventilation and mode of working the mine has been carried out by the late manager since my previous visit. Eleven men have been employed, and the output of coal for the year was 3,483 tons, being an increase of 88 tons as compared with that of the previous year.

Fernside Mine.—This mine, which was opened up in the early part of last year, continues to be worked by a syndicate represented by Messrs. Bayley and Ogle, of Waitara. The management of the mine is carried on by Mr. Joseph Lobb, who has three men employed. The coal varies from 3 ft. to 5 ft. in thickness, but appears to be thinning as it is driven on towards the rise. The return airway which was in progress on my last visit is completed, and the ventilation throughout the working is all that can be desired. The s.s. "Manakau" is engaged in conveying the coal from the mine to Waitara. The output of coal during the year was 1,393 tons, this being an increase of 735 tons as compared with that of the previous year.