

HIKURANGI.

Hikurangi Coal-mine.—This company is steadily extending the workings in a south-easterly direction in Perrett's section, the main level being now in a distance of 2,483 ft. from the entrance of the incline on the surface, and from the main level the bords are worked up towards the outcrop for about 460 ft. A considerable portion of the coal has been worked out on the upper side of the level (except pillars), but as the level advances new bords are opened up, and a sufficient supply of coal is obtained to meet the demand. The amount of coal taken out to the dip of the main level during the year has been limited, but at one place an encroachment was made and a quantity of coal taken out from under the Railway Reserve. So far no damage has been done to the surface. A quantity of coal has been worked out on the east side of the incline, but it is considered there is only a limited amount of coal to work in this direction, and in consequence there are only a few men working here. A shaft has been sunk through the coal in the swamp on the north side of the railway, but, as there was a good deal of water to contend with, operations were suspended for a time, or until pumping machinery was erected to cope with it. The average number of men employed about the mine has been fifty, and the output of coal for the year ended 31st December was 38,572 tons, an increase of 4,535 tons as compared with the previous year. When the mine was last inspected the ventilation was good and the workings safe.

Hikurangi Colliery.—This company's mine being situated on the top of a spur, and the country very broken, the coal-seam on that account has also been very much disturbed, and of a soft nature; consequently this has been a great drawback to the sale of the coal. As the working-places were extended as far as they could be conveniently worked from the present adit-levels (owing to the coal dipping away from them), it was deemed advisable to take out the pillars in sight, and the operations for the greater part of the year have been directed in carrying out this work. These pillars being nearly exhausted, the company contemplates opening up the coal-seam afresh some distance eastward of the present workings, with a view to keeping their customers supplied. An average of eighteen men have been employed, and the output of coal for the year was 11,119 tons.

The *West Bryan's* and *Phoenix Mines* have not been worked during the year, but the Phoenix proprietors are arranging to take over the West Bryan's Mine with a view to commencing work at once. It is contended that the coal can be taken out to greater advantage under one management (as the mines join each other) than formerly.

WHANGAREI.

Kamo, New.—In the first six months of the year three men were employed in this mine on the outcrop, but, the coal here being exhausted, and there being little prospects of opening up any more that would pay with a small outlay, the lessee suspended operations for the time being on the 10th July. The output of coal was 471 tons.

NGUNGURU.

Ngunguru Coal-mine.—The operations in this mine have been chiefly confined to taking out pillars at the top of the incline rise, where the coal is from 5 ft. to 7 ft. in thickness. Four bords are being extended westward, but the coal is thin, varying from 2 ft. to 3 ft. 6 in. thick. The manager is hopeful that as these bords advance the coal will increase in thickness, and thus develop a portion of the property which is as yet practically unprospected. An adit-level was started from the side of the hill about 400 ft. from the entrance of the principal workings, and only a few feet had been driven when the coal was discovered 6 ft. thick. After driving on it a short distance a down-throw fault was met with which cut the coal entirely off, thus blighting their hopes of having found what they considered a new and important discovery. The coal-seam in this mine is very thin in places, and, as faults are frequently met with, it is naturally an expensive mine to work, even although the greater part of the workings are above water-level. An average of thirty-eight men have been employed, and the output of coal for the year has been 14,592 tons.

Kiripaka Mine.—This mine is situated on a spur on the north side of the Ngunguru River, and about 200 ft. above it. The coal is conveyed down a self-acting incline tramway in trucks from the entrance of the main adit-level for a distance of 18 chains to the loading-ground, where it is discharged into barges, and then taken down the river, where it is delivered into scows, &c., and sent to Auckland. The quantity of coal which has yet been proved payable is only limited, but so far it has turned out much better than was anticipated when operations were commenced to open it up. The seam has varied from 10 ft. to 20 ft. in thickness, and, being softer than the Ngunguru coal, it has enabled the proprietors to place it on the market at a small cost, thereby leaving a large margin of profit. The mine was safe and the ventilation good last time it was inspected. An average of ten men have been employed, who have sent away from the mine no less than 11,276 tons of coal during the year.

WAIKATO.

Taupiri Coal-mines Company (Limited).—Mining operations on this company's property have been vigorously proceeded with in three of the sections during the year, and more especially in Ralph's Mine, nearly half of the coal produced being obtained from this section, and the greater part taken out from the dip workings under the river. The company's attention is now directed towards extending the No. 2 level from the dip on the western side of the river, where several bords are being driven, and from which excellent coal is being taken out. On the eastern side of the dip, faults are striking diagonally across the face of the dip, and thereby hampering the workings from being extended in this direction. Mr. Wight, the new manager, is making improvements in the pit-bank to give better facilities for loading the railway-wagons, and the air-shaft has been increased in size to 8 ft. in diameter, and lined with bricks from bottom to top. At this shaft a fan 15 ft. in diameter is being erected to ventilate the mine. An average of eighty-six men have