

1901.
NEW ZEALAND.

WALLSEND COLLIERY

(PETITION OF MINERS RELATIVE TO CONDITION AND RESOURCES OF).

Laid on the Table by leave, and ordered to be printed, 2nd August, 1901.

GENTLEMEN,—

We, the undersigned coal-miners, having been employed in the Wallsend Colliery, beg most respectfully to state that we have seen certain statements *re* the Wallsend Mine, made by Mr. Martin Kennedy and others, to the effect that “the mine is worked out”; also that “the coal is stony and of inferior quality”; also that “the seam thins out on the east side,” and that “the mine is fault-bound to the west.” To most of these statements we give an emphatic denial.

We have looked up the plans published by the Mines Department, as per report on the coal-fields of the Grey Valley, by Messrs. H. A. Gordon, F.G.S., Inspecting Engineer; A. McKay, F.G.S., Mining Geologist; and N. D. Cochrane, Inspector of Mines, to the Hon. A. J. Cadman, Minister of Mines, in 1893, and, as we are quite familiar with the workings of the above colliery, these plans are practically correct. We have laid these plans before a qualified surveyor, who has supplied us with an estimate of coal in sight amounting to a million and a quarter tons. This, we think, is under rather than over the amount. As for quality, the average is equal to any ever produced in the district, and some patches equal to any ever produced in the colony.

No attempt has been made to prospect beyond the western fault. The eastern level has been driven a distance of some 16 chains, and the coal at the face was 14 ft. high when the mine ceased work. During the period of over three years, when the mine was in active operations, we were all the time in solid workings. No pillar coal has been taken out. The dip, when the mine ceased operations, was driven some 20 chains; good coal for the whole of that distance, and no bords worked; in position to start at least thirty bords, giving room for 120 miners, double-shifted (usual method).

Re the stony or dirty quality. During the period this colliery was in active operations the total output was 205,539 tons. The quantity of stone or dirt picked out is still lying at the site where the coal was screened, and it could be put into two ordinary railway-trucks. At Brunner Colliery there is as much as 30 cwt. of stone picked out of an ordinary railway-truck of coal, which will carry some 5 tons. Hence give Wallsend coal the same method of screening as adopted at Brunner, and they will leave the colliery equal as to stone or dirt.

We are of opinion this mine is a most valuable property, as it is close to the Grey-Brunner Railway, and only seven miles from the Port of Greymouth, and in the centre of a large coal-bearing district. We are of opinion that it is a great loss to the colony the Government allowing this valuable property to fall into private hands.

We are pleased to notice that the Greymouth Harbour Board have commenced to prospect by boring; it was not too soon, as the present workings in the Brunner Mine are nearly exhausted, and if something is not immediately done to prepare for the time when it will be exhausted, the whole population will have to leave the district, while there are millions of tons of coal ready for the miners' pick, only requiring the necessary machinery to get it.

We pray you to impress on His Majesty's Government the need of thoroughly testing this district, as we are of opinion that this is one of the most valuable coal deposits in the Southern Hemisphere.