

*Kiripaka (Panipo) Mine.*—As mentioned in my last annual report, the amount of coal in sight in this mine is very limited; the seam in places is 20 ft. thick, from 6 ft. to 12 ft. being worked. The coal is semi-bituminous, is of fair quality, and is largely used by the coastal steamers; but unfortunately the outcrop has been touched at all points. The pillars are at present being withdrawn, and can only last for a few months. Prospecting and boring has been done on the hills in the immediate neighbourhood, but so far nothing of importance has been discovered. 15,968 tons of coal has been won from the mine during the year, and an average of sixteen men have been employed. The mine was inspected twice during the year, and everything was being carried out satisfactorily.

*Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited).*—This company's operations during the year have been principally directed to the working of coal in the Taupiri Reserve and Ralph's sections to supply the market.

In the Taupiri Extended section only four men have been employed, in driving a pair of headings to develop this part of the property. These have been driven to the westward 8 chains, to a point under the river, and from the headings seventeen bords have been opened out; but, as sufficient coal was obtained to supply the demand, there was no necessity to increase the output, and in consequence the bords were not advanced. These headings are now stopped temporarily, and two are being driven from the lowest point in a northerly direction to further prove the value of this freehold.

*Taupiri Reserve:* This section has been continuously worked during the year, operations being confined to extending the Nos. 3 and 4 levels and working the bords, &c., to the rise. In the early part of the year the coal passed through was very soft, but eventually an excellent class of coal was met with, which has now been driven on for some considerable distance. The No. 4 level has been driven in a south-westerly direction a total distance of 33 chains from the bottom of the engine incline, and the incline is down a distance of 28 chains from the surface. As mentioned in my last annual report, the ventilation in this section was not as good as could be desired; but this has since been greatly improved by all the wooden stoppings being taken out and replaced by brick-and-mortar walls from the mouth of the incline to within a reasonable distance of the face of the level. The upcast shaft has been retimbered, new ladders put in, and the old workings made safe where required.

*Ralph's Taupiri:* In this section work has been vigorously pushed ahead. More than half of the coal won from the company's mines was obtained from here. The underground engine incline has been extended, and is now down a total distance of 20 chains and 320 ft. vertical from the surface. As the seam is rising ahead, a large area of coal will be won from this point. In the early part of the year the brace (or pit-bank) was raised 5 ft. at the shaft, and the tramway leading from the shaft to the tipplers was laid down on a slight grade, so that by this means the full skips gravitate to the tipplers, where they are emptied into the railway-wagons, the empties being brought back to the shaft by a creeper chain. This is worked by a small engine, which is capable of being regulated to any speed required, a considerable amount of manual labour being thus saved. A new 80-horse-power boiler has been erected as an additional power to work the machinery, &c.; also a new workshop has been built and fitted up with lathes, drills, screwing-machines, &c. Siding-accommodation has also been made sufficient to allow thirty-five wagons to stand behind the tipplers. The mines were inspected three times during the year, and, as considerable improvements have been made generally, there is now little to complain of.

The total output of coal from these mines for the year ended 31st December, 1901, was 75,742 tons. An average of 160 men were employed.

*Harrison's Taupiri.*—The operations in this mine are carried on from a dip incline which was sunk on the coal for a distance of 330 ft. The seam is 24 ft. thick, and from 16 ft. to 20 ft. is worked. As this mine is situated on the outcrop of Ralph's old mine, the amount of coal to be obtained from here is limited; but the company has been successful in raising 8,344 tons of coal during the year at a small cost. The company has also directed their attention to prospecting for coal on the rising ground at Pukemirio, some six miles to the westward of the Waikato River at Huntly, and the manager informs me that they have been successful in discovering a seam of coal 20 ft. to 24 ft. in thickness over a large area of ground. An average of thirty men have been employed by this company. The mine was inspected three times during the year, and the ventilation was found to be good and the workings safe.

*Maramarua Coal-mine (late Miranda).*—This mine is worked by a syndicate (of which Mr. William Tattley, sen., is at the head), whose operations so far have been limited. An adit incline has been put down from the surface about 14 chains south of the Miranda Coal Company's old shaft. The incline is down a distance of 360 ft., and the coal in the face at the time of my visit was of good quality, but the work then was chiefly confined to driving a return airway. A good deal of trouble was at first experienced with the water—which had accumulated in the old workings—percolating through the coal more rapidly than the small Tangye pump could contend with, but an additional pump and boiler were obtained, and when put in position the water difficulty was overcome. A large quantity of coal could be raised from this mine, as the seam is 55 ft. thick in places and extends over a large area; but, as the mine is a considerable distance from the Government railway, the cost of putting it on the market is thereby increased, which makes it a difficult matter to compete against those mines having facilities for putting the coal direct from the mine into the railway-wagons. As the syndicate has only lately got into the producing stage, the output up to the end of December was only 430 tons of coal. An average of ten men have been employed. The mine was inspected on the 7th December. The workings were safe, and an air-course was being made for the purpose of ventilating the mine.

*Taranaki Collieries (Limited), Moku.*—The properties formerly known as the "Marysville" and "Fernside" have been amalgamated, and are now known as the "Mangapapa," the property