

demand ; but as the mine is well opened, a much larger quantity of coal could easily be raised if it were required. The coal having to be conveyed in barges from the mine to the railway, a distance of ten miles, and with the extra handling increases the cost of the coal by the time it is placed in the wagons, therefore it places the company at a disadvantage as compared with some other mines. When inspecting the mine, the workings and the equipments necessary for the raising and the conveying the coal to the railway were found to be safe and in an efficient state of repair. The ventilation was fairly good ; but another shaft is to be sunk to connect with the workings for an outlet, and this will also improve the ventilation. The output of coal was 19,928 tons, an increase of 3,934 tons. Thirty-four men were employed.

*Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited)* (E. S. Wight, manager).—Ralph's section : During the past twelve months the main dip and headings have been extended in the direction of the newly acquired lease of coal under Lake Wahi. This work is being extended with reasonable despatch ; but owing to the uneven nature of the floor a large amount of expense has been incurred by straightening the main dip in order to get a uniform grade, as this will be the future main haulage-road. The work has been carried out with very great care, and when finished will give increased facilities in bringing the coal to the shaft. The greater part of the haulage is done by the endless-rope system, which works very well, and is a great saving when contrasted with the means previously used. The portion of the seam worked varies from 7 ft. to 20 ft. in height. The coal is of a very fine quality, and when broken out with ordinary care only a limited amount of small coal is produced on account of its hardness, therefore the cost is minimum. The mine has been inspected frequently, and although there has been a number of minor accidents in the shape of men receiving cuts and bruises, yet there have been no serious accidents, and, as far as the working is concerned, there has been little cause for complaint. A fan is used for the purpose of ventilating the mine, and when driven at an ordinary rate of speed is capable of causing a larger inrush of air than is required by the Coal-mines Act. The screening plant is working very satisfactorily, and has been a great saving by enabling the company to classify and deliver the coal into the railway-wagons at less cost than hitherto, and gives more satisfaction to consumers. The output of coal for the year from this section totalled 88,856 tons, and 159 men were employed.

The extended section : Some extensive improvements have been effected during the year, and with the completion of the screening plant, the erection of a new and first-class ventilation fan, a "Sirocco" 50 in. diameter and driven by a 54-horse power compound steam-engine, the extension of the main-dip headings, and other development-work, this section of the company's mine may be considered a valuable property. For the year an average of ninety-three men were employed and 57,500 tons of coal produced. This is no mean output, but with the improved facilities a greater quantity could be delivered if required. The ventilation is good ; the fan is causing 35,500 cubic feet of air to circulate through the workings, and with a slight improvement in the airways a much larger volume may be circulated. An endless-rope haulage system was installed at this mine, driven by a pair of engines, 12 in. diameter, 30 in. stroke, placed on the surface, connected with the mine by means of boreholes lined with iron pipes, through which the rope passes.

*Taupiri Reserve* : It appears that this section of the company's mine is kept as a reserve, so that in the event of an increased demand for coal the company has this section to draw upon. The mine has been kept open and drained throughout the year, and an average of eleven men employed in keeping the workings and machinery in good order and producing 6,158 tons of coal, which is a sufficient quantity to comply with the terms of the lease. The coal is of a good quality, and there is yet a large amount in sight. The mine when visited was found to be in good order, with a sufficient volume of air passing through the workings. The total output for the year for the Taupiri coal-mines was 152,588 tons, being an increase of 33,967 over the preceding year, whilst dividends to the extent of £6,375 were paid.

*Drury Colliery, Drury* (J. Holden, manager).—The work carried on in this mine during the past twelve months has only been very little, as the company decided to combine brickmaking, &c., on the mine with a view to making the mine a success ; and as kilns had to be constructed, and machinery placed in position for this purpose, the men have been chiefly employed at the brickworks. The coal is of a poor quality, and will not compete favourably on the market with coal from the other mines in the district, but no doubt a fair quantity will be used at their own kilns. The output was 595 tons, and four men were employed.

*Taupiri South* (J. Duncan, manager).—The company has done but little work in this mine. Their attention has been directed to that portion of the property near the top of the spur of the hill, where at one place opened out in the early part of the year 2,856 tons of coal was obtained ; but as this place became exhausted another drive was put in the hill and 275 raised. Since then a good deal of prospecting-work has been carried out, but not with as favourable results as anticipated, and it is said the company are likely to stop operations for the present. Five men were employed.

*Taupiri West Coal-mining Company (Limited)* (R. McEwen, manager).—This is a new coal-mine, the property being situated on the western side of the Waikato River, and about a mile and a quarter from the Huntly Railway-station. The greater portion is on Crown lands held on lease from the Government, and includes coal under Lake Rotoiti and the larger part of that under Lake Wahi, altogether about 1,050 acres. A considerable amount of prospecting has been done by the original syndicate who first took it up in the shape of boring, and who discovered two different seams of coal, the top seam being 10 ft. thick and the main seam about 24 ft. The prospects met with being very satisfactorily, the shareholders determined to sink a shaft, which has reached a depth of 180 ft., where the seam was cut through and the coal found to be equal to the best local production. A small oil-engine was used for the hoisting of the stuff broken in the shaft and for baling the water out to the depth named ; but the prospects were such as to encourage the directors to obtain modern winding and pumping machinery, and a powerful winding-engine and plant have been purchased, and are being