

ANNEXURE A.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY INSPECTORS OF MINES.

NORTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (WILLIAM BARCLAY, Inspector of Coal-mines).

IN compliance with the Coal-mines Act, I have the honour to submit the following report:—

OUTPUT OF COAL.

The coal trade in the Northern District continues to expand, and an output of 837,620 tons has been produced by the working mines in the Waikato, Taranaki, and North Auckland Districts, compared with 807,413 for the year 1934 and 626,926 tons for the year 1933.

The number of persons ordinarily employed in and about the mines for the year was 1,433, compared with 1,452 for the year 1934.

The demand for slack coal has been stationary during the year, and the growing demand for a sized coal, screened between meshes of $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. and $3\frac{1}{4}$ in., has resulted in reduced sales for large coal, which used to gain the best returns. At some of the mines the demand has so changed that the lump coal is being broken up into smaller sizes after being screened.

In former years house, kitchen, and railway requirements passed over a $\frac{3}{4}$ in mesh, leaving 25 per cent. of slack. To-day similar grades of coal are made over a mesh of $1\frac{1}{8}$ in., with a corresponding increase of slack, of which large quantities are being dumped as unmarketable. If the companies could agree to revert to the smaller sizes of kitchen and steam coal it would lead to a material reduction in the amount of slack dumped.

There has been a steady increase in the sales of carbonettes manufactured by the Waikato low-temperature carbonization plant at Rotowaro.

No fatal accidents occurred to workmen engaged in and about the mines, and, when it is known that mining operations during the year have been confined to pillar-extraction in many of the thick coal-seams in the Waikato District, this immunity from serious accidents can be attributed to results obtained from leaving large pillars in the first working, systematic timbering of roofs in pillar places, the vigilance of the mine officials, and in no small measure to the maintenance, by the workmen, of the roof supports near the faces. Of ordinary accidents, two, with rather serious consequences, were caused by truckers losing control of their skips on trucking-roads.

The coal-mines in the Waikato and Taranaki Districts suffered less idle time during the year, and, during the summer months when trade demand is usually slack, an average of not less than four days per week was maintained at the principal mines. There are still fifty to sixty unemployed coal-miners in the Waikato District, but the majority of these men are over sixty years of age.

In the Hikurangi District the loss of the two large mines as a result of flooding has caused serious hardship to the resident miners, and they are all awaiting a period of better times from the prospecting operations being carried out on the Hikurangi and Kamo Coalfields.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS OF EACH COLLIERY FOR THE YEAR 1935.

North Auckland District.

Waro Coal-mines (Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd., Owners).—Mining operations during the year were confined to the working of isolated areas of coal left by a former working in Phoenix dip, Dunn's dip, and No. 6 Rocks Section. An output of 22,859 tons was won, and 80 men were employed in the various drives and in prospecting and boring in exploration of the remaining areas of the Hikurangi Coalfield. Three boreholes, designated No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3, were drilled 498 ft., 547 ft., and 306 ft. respectively in close proximity to View Road and Section 68 in proof of the continuity of the seam in the direction of the Hikurangi Flat. The average thickness of the proved seam at the stated depths was 5 ft. 6 in., and two additional holes, drilled ahead of Perrett's west workings, have proved that at least 250,000 tons of coal are in sight for future working. Subsequent to this boring two stone dips were set away during the month of October for the purpose of connecting the proved area to the existing loading-bank and the plant already installed at the Waro Colliery. The approximate length of the main drive will be 1,400 ft. at a dip of at 1 in 4, and the companion drive should tap the seam at 600 ft. at a grade of 1 in 3.

Operations in No. 2 Mine, Section 39 S.W., discouraged the intention to further prospect this area, as the working seam was only 4 ft. thick and contained numerous stone bands which rendered the coal unmarketable.

Hikurangi No. 2A Coal-mine (Lease from Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd.: Lawson and Fagan).—The party was engaged in boring and opening out small drives for the working of a small area of shallow coal leased from the Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd. The output has been won from No. 1 drive, and No. 2 drive is being driven for the purpose of reaching a strip of coal proved along the southern boundary.

Hicks and Party (Perrett's Area).—Hicks and party are engaged in removing a narrow block of coal remaining on Perrett's freehold on the east side of the railway near the Waro Station. The seam is 10 ft. thick, and approximately 3,000 tons of coal are available for extraction.

Turnbull and Doel (Perrett's Area).—The party has extracted 700 tons of coal from remaining pillars of old workings near the railway. No. 1 drive has been abandoned, and the party is engaged in boring another area of old ground likely to contain several hundred tons of coal.

The Rocks Area.

Fearnley's Coal-mine (Rocks Area).—A small quantity of fireclay is being won from an area leased from the Hikurangi Coal Co., Ltd.

Flannagan's Coal-mine (Rocks Area).—This mine was closed down during the year, and no further operations have been commenced.

Laurie's Coal-mine (Rocks Area).—The bottom seam was followed a short distance to the dip on the south end of the Rocks area near the main highway. Two pillars near the entrance to the mine remain for extraction.

Orr and Party (Rocks Area).—The party has opened out in the bottom seam (3 ft. thick) occurring under Kerr and Wyatt's old top seam workings of ten years ago.

The Rocks Coal-mine (Rocks Area).—A small area of coal, 3 ft. thick, is being opened out by C. Latham and Party. The seam is being followed along a ridge towards workings abandoned by Kerr and Wyatt.

Gilby's Coal-mine (Rocks Area).—A party of unemployed miners has been successful in winning coal during the past two months from an area of soft coal lying near the surface. Another area is being prospected with fair results.

Coutt's Coal-mine.—The party is engaged in laying a tramway to an isolated area of coal proved by boring. The seam is at a shallow depth, and the area to be worked is surrounded by falls of a previous working.

Jones and Party (Tauranga Block).—This mine is being worked by Jones and party, who received assistance from the Unemployment Board in respect to two men engaged in prospecting operations. The coal in the old drive top seam is almost exhausted, and the party is engaged in driving a water-free stone drive for a distance of three chains to a proved bottom seam, with coal 5 ft. thick.