

As every one in the mine was killed, and this included the mine-manager, both underviewers, and three deputies, besides both the mine electricians, direct evidence as to the happening was unobtainable.

It appears that, following the report of an electrical fault in the mine which showed on the Huntly substation's instruments at approximately 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, 23rd September, and which had been traced by Waikato Central Power Board employees to the mine-mouth, it was decided by the management that the electricians, Messrs. Turley and Bell, would enter the mine to test for the "short" on the 24th at 8 a.m. They did so in the company of the examining deputies on duty, Messrs. R. Ireland and W. G. Cole, the mine fan not being started. Mr. Blackburn, the mine-manager, went into the mine about an hour later, probably to see how the testing was progressing, and by telephone message from inside the mine at about 9.30 a.m. asked for the engineer to start the fan. This was done at once. A message from Mr. W. G. Cole was also received with the same request, and a further request from Mr. Blackburn, who also asked that five experienced shiftmen be sent into the mine. Four of these, Messrs. Clark, Hunter, Marshall, and Peden entered the mine, and were followed by Messrs. W. Wilcox and W. Brown, who went in separately. As no further message was received, Mr. Thomas, the engineer, became alarmed, entered the mine with a companion, and found the body of Mr. W. Brown in the travelling-way near J hill. Mr. Thomas and his companion had to return, as they were affected, but gave the alarm.

Rescue parties worked all night and the following day in restoring ventilation and isolating a fire which was found in the main return, and the bodies of eight of the men were recovered. The bodies of R. Ireland, Turley, and Bell were found on Tuesday, 26th September, by a party who traversed the main return.

A Royal Commission inquired into the cause of the fatalities, sittings being held at Huntly from 27th November to 6th December and on 22nd and 23rd January.

Attempts were made on 28th to 30th December and on 19th January to reach the seat of the fire in the main return, with partial success, and permanent stoppings were erected in the main return,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  chains from the shaft through the J fault on the outbye side and near the J intake on the inbye side. It is thought that a fire which was shown to have occurred in the main return at the foot of this shaft during the morning of Saturday, 23rd September, and which was not reported, was the cause of the carbon-monoxide gas which filled the workings. The fire was thought to have been extinguished at the time, but may have burnt up again later. The electrical fault indicated at Huntly on the Saturday could have been accounted for by evidence of a heavy "short" in the cable, which was enclosed in 3 in. water-pipe conduit, near E section, but it is possible that another one occurred in the section of the main return now enclosed by stoppings.

*Glen Afton No. 2 Colliery.*—No. 4 Section: The main headings have been extended 16 chains from the entrance in continuation of the line of B haulage. The seam is 23 ft. thick with a 6 in. parting of black clay at 16 ft., and a splint band varying in thickness in the lower part of the seam has somewhat hindered progress.

Machine-cut panels are being developed to the north-west and south-east of the main drive. A fault has been encountered in the north-west development drive at 7 chains from the main drive, and is probably a continuation of the fault bounding B3 left panel to the north-west.

The north-east end of B haulage, which was narrow, has been widened to 10 ft. by 7 ft. in the clear and well timbered with square sets for a distance of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  chains, and preparations are being made to extend B endless-rope haulage to No. 4 section, cutting out two winches.

In A section a heading is being extended in a westerly direction to develop an area of unworked coal proved by bores to be 15 ft. thick.

Pillaring in B1 right panel of B section was completed in July, and in B2 left was well advanced by the end of the year.

E section headings were advanced to 35 chains from the main drive, and development is continuing in E2 left and E3 right panels, while pillaring is proceeding in E1 left. In E2 right the second working consists of splitting the pillars only, because of surface swamp. In E1 right panel, pillaring was completed in June.

Pillaring in F section was completed during the year, while the second working of G section was commenced in July after completion of development.

*Graham Colliery.*—Pillaring was continued throughout the year, the pillars worked being roadside pillars and the unworked coal lying between the main haulage road and the outcrop to the north. No difficulties occurred due to heating or other causes.

*Waikato Extended Colliery.*—Work on the area adjacent to the old Waikato Mine workings ceased in June owing to the long haulage. A sealed-off section of pillars left in the first working in Roose's area to the west of the main road was entered and reroaded, three stoppings being erected to prevent heating of fallen ground farther to the west. Pillaring proceeded here until early in November, no trouble being caused by heating, but a slight crush due to old roads in the lower seam then developed and the area had again to be sealed off. The seam was 20 ft. thick and of good quality, and close on 1,000 tons of coal was recovered from the area while being worked. Since November work has been confined to extraction of pillars from the outcrop in the Taupiri lease.

*Huntly Brickworks.*—Five men were steadily employed working a deposit of fireclay, the material being used by the company for manufacture of fire and building bricks at Huntly. The height of face worked has been reduced from 50 ft. to 25 ft. by forming a new working-floor on top of a seam of inferior material which divides the deposit, and the endless-rope haulage has been extended to the new face by forming a ramp.

*Taupiri East Coal-mine.*—Workings driven to the south-west in the Crown lease area under Lake Kīmihia crossed a 5 ft. downthrow fault in September. The seam thinned considerably and the floor commenced to rise to the south-west, and workings in this direction were stopped owing to the danger of an inrush of water. The Crown lease was determined in December, and since then an area of pillars to the east of the main haulage road, and belonging to the Auckland University Council, has been worked. The seam is 20 ft. to 25 ft. thick and of excellent quality.

*Whatawhata Campbell Colliery.*—Splitting of pillars was continued to the rise on the south side of the main dip, three miners being employed. As prospecting to the south and west had shown no coal of marketable quality, and as no further available pillars remained, work in this section ceased late in the year. The surface haulage was extended 10 chains to the south-west from the old mine-mouth, and two prospecting headings are being driven to the rise in a southerly direction to test an unworked block of coal lying to the west of Fox's old workings. The seam so far is 6 ft. thick with light cover and rises at a grade of 1 in 5. A small 3 ft. upthrow has been crossed near the face of the headings, which have been driven 80 ft.

*Glen Afton Potteries Opencast Mine.*—Opencast faces were worked for coal and fireclay, the whole output being used in the pottery-works adjoining the pit. The coal-seam worked is 6 ft. thick and the fireclay face 15 ft.

*Dally's Coal-mine.*—A small amount of coal for local requirements has been produced from a prospecting drive in an outcrop to the south of the valley traversed by the Kihī Road, in the Hauturu district. The seam is 6 ft. 6 in. thick and of good clean quality for the district, and the floor rises slightly in the direction of the drive, which is slightly east of south. The roof is sandstone and reasonably good.

*Renown Colliery.*—Development to the east in Tapp's area has been continued, No. 3 south headings having been advanced to a point 31 chains beyond No. 3 east level. No. 4 west levels and No. 4 east levels have been driven  $11\frac{1}{2}$  chains and  $9\frac{1}{2}$  chains from No. 1 south respectively, and panels off these levels are being actively developed. The coal-seam in No. 3 south headings and No. 4 east levels has maintained its thickness of 15 ft., but in No. 4 east levels has thinned to 10 ft.

Development in No. 1 west level off No. 2 north headings is being rapidly pushed ahead, and is now greatly assisted by a new auxiliary haulage which has recently been installed. No. 1 west level has been driven to a point  $13\frac{1}{2}$  chains off No. 2 north.

Pillar-extraction is being continued in No. 1 panel west of No. 1 south level, and also in No. 2 east panel off No. 3 south-heading, and the barrier pillars in this area are also being withdrawn.