

Underground Workings.—Coal-winning operations have been confined to the development of solid places with the exception of two pairs of miners extracting head-coal in the No. 1 North section. The development has been continued satisfactorily in the No. 2 North heading, No. 2 South, and No. 1 South dip. In the No. 2 South heading, conditions have become extremely wet with bad roof, and the coal-seam has thinned to 8 ft. The fault encountered on the west side of No. 2 North heading was passed through with prospects of a good section opening out on this side. During the year the number of miners has been increased from 48 to 66, the increase being partly accounted for by the miners from the James Colliery being transferred to this mine. The main East heading has been stopped on the "Bob" fault for a considerable time and a start has been made with a drive to cross this fault. The position of the coal-seam has been proved by a rise which was driven through from the back heading.

BLACKBALL COLLIERY

Coal-winning.—The gross output for the year was 45,029 tons 9 cwt., an increase of 10,502 tons 7 cwt. when compared with the figures for the previous year. After allowing for waste (300 tons 11 cwt.) and taking into consideration 3,300 tons written off in April, 1943, there remained for disposal a net output of 41,428 tons 18 cwt.

Taking into account the stocks on hand at the beginning and end of the year, the following statement shows details of the coal disposed of during the year :—

1st April, 1943—				Tons cwt. qr.	Tons cwt. qr.
Stock in bin and yard	..	..	..	4,823 12 0	
Stock on wharf	..	..	..	195 12 0	
Add net output for year					5,019 4 0
					41,428 18 0
					46,448 2 0
31st March, 1944—					
Less stock in bin and yard	..	..	..	..	1,111 13 2
Total disposed of				..	45,336 8 2

Disposals

Shipped	..	..	..	20,171 9 2	
Railed to Canterbury, Otago, &c.	..	..	..	8,375 1 0	
Railway sales	..	..	..	9,824 6 0	
Local and mine sales	..	..	..	5,652 18 0	
Sales to workmen and free issues	..	..	..	899 0 0	
Used on works	..	..	..	413 14 0	
					45,336 8 2

The gross output from the colliery since it was taken over by the State Coal-mines totals 105,506 tons 14 cwt.

Days worked.—During the year the colliery worked on 264 days, an increase of 52 days when compared with the previous year. The possible working-days, including 16 back Saturdays, were 278. The difference between the days worked and the possible working-days is accounted for as follows : 1 day, Good Friday ; 1 day, Easter Monday ; 1 day, burnt-out motor ; 2 days, dispute *re* truckers' time ; 1 day, breakdown at fan ; 8 days, Christmas holidays.

Employees.—In connection with coal-winning, the average number of persons employed in and about the mine was 95 men and 3 boys, made up as follows—Underground : Coal-hewers, 30 ; deputies, shiftmen, and truckers, 42. Surface : 23 men and 3 boys.

Expenditure.—The total expenditure in connection with coal-winning for wages, stores, mine timber, and compensation, together with cost of fuel used on works, amounted to £61,105, as compared with £48,250 for the previous year.

Coal-hewers' Average Daily Earnings.—The coal-hewers' average daily earnings (gross) were £2 7s. 9d. per day, and after deducting stores (explosives) their net return was £2 3s. 1d., a decrease of 1s. 6d. per day when compared with the previous year.

Daily Output.—The average daily output was 170 tons 11 cwt. and the coal-hewers' average daily output was 7 tons 9 cwt., as compared with 162 tons 17 cwt. and 7 tons 11 cwt. respectively for the previous year.

Deficiencies.—The total amount paid under the minimum-wage clause was £49 0s. 9d.

Accidents.—There were no accidents of a serious nature at the Blackball Colliery during the year.

Underground Workings.—All the coal is being won from development work. A pair of headings were developed off No. 2 South level to meet No. 4 Bore. These headings have been extended a distance of 16 chains, the floor being extremely undulating, and the coal, maintaining an average thickness of about 10 ft. to 12 ft., is of good quality.

Between the South heading and the main drive a section has been developed with a "Jeffrey" coal-cutting machine, and this section will eventually be used as a water-sump.

The main drive was developed for 10 chains and then was stopped in about 4 ft. of coal. The main dip crossed a "roll" in the floor of about 12 ft.

To the north of the main drive and 2 chains back from the face two levels have been driven for a distance of 5 chains. These levels were stopped as the result of a large inflow of water. About 1 chain from the face a pair of headings are being driven towards No. 1 North, from which it is hoped to develop a panel.

Plant.—During the year a "Sirocco" fan was installed, thus effecting a considerable improvement in the ventilation.