

Late in December a change from railway to domestic coal caused a cessation of production while the necessary alterations were being attended to.

A roadside bin of 35 tons capacity with two compartments, screened and slack, was constructed alongside the Lee Creek Mine road, and a 4 ft. steel-lined chute at a grade of 28 degrees, with bar-screen fitted in the lower section, was erected up the slope to the upper roadway to the coal face. This plant serves for the three faces which have operated, the coal being transported by lorry to the chute, while the six or eight trucks now load from the roadside bin instead of as formerly at the coal face. The bar-screen operates perfectly, the coal being fed as required to the screen by doors, lever operated, and Waitewhena coal with its cuboidal fracture screens well.

The shallow overburden in and adjacent to the upper area Lee Creek bed has proved unsuitable for bulldozers, which machines were continually in trouble, and the Diesel navy operating in conjunction with two trucks carting to a central dump has given good results, but delivery of the second navy promised by the contractor has been delayed, and the coal-face machine has been doing both jobs. This naturally interferes with continuity of supplies, and the delivery of the second machine is an urgent matter.

Thorough surveys of a further four areas along the Waitewhena face and on each side of the Mangarahoe valley have proved fields suitable for opencast operations for the next ten years with an increased output.

With the plant installed and No. 2 area operating, equipment for a further area will be erected to enable production to be shifted as required to meet the conditions or interruptions experienced.

I have, &c.,
GEORGE SMITH, District Manager.

THE MANAGER, Wilton State Colliery, Ngaruawahia, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington

SIR,—

15th April, 1946.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the working of the above colliery for the year ended 31st March, 1946.

Coal-winning.—The gross output for the year was 88,652 tons 14 cwt. After allowing for waste, 4,164 tons 6 cwt., and coal used on works, 837 tons 17 cwt., there remained for disposal a net output of 83,650 tons 11 cwt.

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

1st April, 1945—			Tons	cwt.	qr.
Stock in railway wagons	..	..		3	0 0
Add net output for year	..	..	83,650	11	0
				83,653	11 0
31st March, 1946—					
Less stock in railway wagons	..	..		28	0 0
Total disposed of	..	..	83,625	11	0

Disposals

				Tons	cwt.	qr.
Railed	..	..	..	49,715	9	0
Railway sales	..	..	..	32,859	18	0
Local and mine sales	..	..	..
Sales to workmen and free issues	..	..	..	1,050	4	0
					83,625	11 0