

COAL-PRODUCTION

Opencast Mines, Waikato.—Excavation at No. 2, Glen Massey (Kemp's Opencast), ceased in June, 1949, after the removal of 22,100 cubic yards during the year, making a total since the opening of the field in 1944–45 of 2,313,149 cubic yards of overburden. Coal removal ceased in August, 1949, when 12,125 tons had been lifted for the year, making a total for the life of the field of 239,093 tons.

Excavation at Hillcrest Field commenced in February, 1948, and 179,900 cubic yards of overburden were shifted prior to 31st March, 1949 (when operations came to an end), making a total to date of 393,700 cubic yards. Coal-mining commenced in April, 1949, and during the year 48,252 tons 13 cwt. were obtained.

As working diminished at Glen Afton, the plant was moved to the Rotowaro area.

Stripping commenced on Barker's Field on 15th March, 1949; 21,800 cubic yards of overburden had been shifted up to the end of that month. Since then a further 209,100 cubic yards of material have been shifted, making a total to date of 230,900 cubic yards. During the year, 33,842 tons of coal were procured.

Excavation at Devlin's Field commenced in February, 1950, and to date 54,900 cubic yards of overburden have been shifted.

Opencast Mine, Waitewhenua.—The stripping removed during the year aggregated 62,158 cubic yards, making a total to date of 719,373 cubic yards. Coal extraction was 39,264 tons, making a total of 190,318 tons to 31st March, 1950.

Access roads in the No. 2 area have been extended. An access road is being built to a new area, No. 5. A total of 3,389 cubic yards of metal was spread on the Pio Pio – Ohura Main Highway to restore the surface after heavy rain and so enable the output of coal to be maintained.

Stockton Ropeway.—Despite the difficulty of recruiting labour in a predominantly mining district, the construction of the Stockton ropeway has made good progress.

Access tracks have been constructed over very rough country and 11 of the 199 towers have been erected, and concrete bases constructed for a further 24.

Opencast Mine, Wangaloa.—Work on stripping the overburden and winning coal has continued throughout the year, with the usual seasonal fluctuations. In spite of very wet winter conditions, coal tallies were maintained at a high level during the winter months, when the demand was high. A total coal output of 41,222 tons 4 cwt. was achieved. Approximately 180,000 cubic yards of overburden were removed during the year.

The stripping has consisted of a very tight conglomerate requiring continuous use of a rooter. In October, 1949, two "Tournapull" units were introduced on to the works and, in spite of minor hold-ups, excellent work has been done on a long uphill lead. Coal is now assured for the coming winter.

Access roads have given little trouble.

The mine buildings and camp are in good condition and have been painted and repaired during the slack coal period in the summer months.

Opencast Mines, Southland.—During the year, machines operating at McLean's Opencast Mine, Ohai, stripped 126,700 cubic yards of overburden and extracted 43,879 tons of coal. In addition, 14,500 tons of coal were stripped and await extraction. Machines on hire to the Mines Department removed 50,000 cubic yards of overburden at Linton Opencast Mine, where a fire threatens to close the underground mine unless the coal is removed. Seven thousand cubic yards of spoil have been shifted for opening up the entrance to the proposed Morley Mine.

At Ohai Miners' Hostel the grounds were cleared up and planted in shrubs and trees, and the roadways were sealed.