

Extensive tunnel and bridge works are in progress to deviate the Ironbridge main haulage-line from a given point in the mine to a central loading-station on the Coalbrookdale main line. This conjunctive system of loading and hauling is calculated to simplify operations and maintain a more uniform and increased output; but more powerful machinery will be required. Further, in addition to the present working-fan, a ventilating-shaft 86 ft. in depth by 100 square feet in area is sunk and connected with the main dip works. A 7 ft. diameter "Schiele" fan is in course of removal and re-erection.

Reports and other provisions of the Act are strictly attended to and kept to date throughout both the Denniston collieries; also, more extensive systems of ventilation are steadily proceeding. During the year six inspections have been made of the collieries. No serious accidents have occurred.

Mr. Dixon kindly furnishes the following: Since keeping a record of shots fired from the 1st September to the 31st December, 1902, the facts are as follows: 18,903 shots fired; coal won as a result, 81,662 tons, yielding an average of 4.32 tons per shot. In addition there were 110 shots fired in stone. The percentage of miss-shots was satisfactory, being only 0.24 of a shot per hundred. This is exclusive of all our blasting in water-drive and deviation work, and therefore refers solely to coal-winning.

*Coal Creek Coal-mine* (George Walker, lessee).—(4/12/1902): The lessee has intrusted the working of this valuable property to two miners, who take a special interest in the safety of the mine, and procure a first-class coal, suitable for household or steaming purposes. The coal is chiefly used for dredges on the Buller River.

*Whitecliffs* (Job Lines).—(4/12/1902): Owing to non-demand for the coal the mine has been shut down during the past six months, otherwise the mine is in good order.

*Flaxbush Coal-mine*.—(3/12/1902): There are three miners employed getting steaming-coal, chiefly for the supply of Mokoia and Feddersen's dredges. The thickness of coal-seam varies from 2 ft. to 2 ft. 6 in., and, being highly inclined, is worked in a similar method to a quartz reef. Timber is freely used, and ventilation maintained by rises direct to the surface.

*Langford Coal-mine*.—Further effort has not been made to reopen this mine.

*Bourke's Creek Coal-mine*.—(13/10/1902): In consequence of the rise pillar-working being totally exhausted to the mine-mouth, output of coal has been suspended for several months pending fresh development. The lessees, however, have recently reopened their low-level rock adit in view of working the deeper areas.

*Archer's Freehold*.—(16/10/1902): With respect to the working on this property there is practically no change of importance, mining operations being confined to the adit level, while ventilation is carried forward by rises driven direct to the surface as the face proceeds. Output has increased materially as the superior quality of the coal secures a ready market, the small coal being used on the local dredges.

*Coghlan's Freehold*.—(16/10/1902): This mine was recently opened near the cap of the hill, and the coal conveyed by a self-acting incline to the main road. Quality and thickness of coal-seam are similar to those on Archer's property.

The Crown land property recently disputed between Archer and Coghlan is not being worked at present.

*Lockington's Leasehold, Bourke's Creek*.—Regarding the progressive stage to which the development of this leasehold has attained, it may be said that construction of tram-lines and driving of rock tunnel to win the coal-seam are practically carried out on the deferred-payment system, as the works stated were at a standstill, the miners having struck work on the morning of my visit. According to Mr. Lockington's statement, 12 chains of tram-lines and 100 ft. of rock tunnelling are required before the coal can become a marketable product.

*Blackadder's Leasehold, Reefton Town Belt*.—The development of this leasehold comprises a rock tunnel, driven from the eastern boundary, intersecting the coal-seam at a distance of 100 ft., but further operations have been suspended in this direction pending the results disclosed from the western side. Unfortunately the western slope of the Town Belt forms a huge slide, and, although driving has been extended 285 ft. into the hill, solid country has not yet been met with.

*Murray Creek Coal-mine*.—(14/10/1902): Notably, the change which transfer of ownership has effected in the development of this open-faced property reflects credit on the present owner, as some thousand tons of valuable coal has been mined and utilised for steaming purposes at Murray Creek battery. This mine was formerly worked for household fuel only, the small coal being sluiced into the creek for want of a profitable market.

*Phoenix Coal-mine* (John Knight, owner).—(14/10/1902): In view of extending the low-level district of working to connect with the originally worked rise districts, the fault-line intersecting the lease has been cut in order to facilitate trucking and ventilation. Effective ventilation is carried forward by holings into the rise level. These workings are in good order, and the coal, which is of superior quality, finds a ready market.

*Lankey's Creek Coal-mine*.—Nothing further has been done on this leasehold since the claim was "jumped."

*New Inkerman Coal-mine*.—Stoping is continued on the adit level, and the coal is used exclusively for steaming on the gold-mining company's property.

*Dent's Creek*.—(14/10/1902): This lease was surrendered recently.

*Progress New Mine*.—(14/10/1902): The supply of steaming-coal for the company's works has been chiefly won from pillars which are now nearing exhaustion. Provision is made, however, for the maintenance of output from a newly opened section of the lease. Timber is freely used, and the removal of pillars is effected without loss.