

had been in use some three years. The alarm being raised all hands turned out. Steps were taken to close all openings; stoppings were erected underground, and the several shafts in use were covered or partially filled in, and the fire became damped down. The area affected was isolated and confined to the northern section of workings. The immediate cause of the fire could only be conjectured; the mine was free from dross, and spontaneous ignition had not been anticipated. Mr. Lloyd is of opinion that a spark or other light had communicated itself to the woodwork at bottom of engine shaft, and had been fanned into a flame by the ventilating-current sweeping past on its course through the workings. Arrangements are being made to bring in a large body of water to pour down the shafts. Output being maintained from No. 2 or old mine section pillars, and from the opencast which had fortunately been well developed in readiness for ordinary winter trade. (12/6/1903): Fire area has been sealed up for eight weeks. Plentiful supply of water constantly running into the mine, being directed from the surface as found advisable or necessary to combat the fire at weak points on the line of outcrop in opencast. A plentiful supply of timber in use and on the premises for use as required in No. 2 workings. (19/6/1903): This visit was paid in consequence of a fatal accident to Henry Currie, miner, who was found dead under a fall of coal at the face on the 18th instant. I found a row of props 3 ft. apart on each side of the roadway set close up to face. The block of coal had come away unexpectedly from between two diagonal cross-backs and an invisible smooth parting in the roof ahead. The deputy had been in the place a short time previous to Currie being missed, when he considered the place quite safe. Great attention is paid to the timbering of all working-places in this mine, rendered necessary by the frequency with which cross clay backs occur, particularly so near the outcrop. (21/10/1903): Fire being gradually suppressed, three pipe-lines conveying 40,000 gallons of water per hour being directed on the seat of fire; progress necessarily slow, the air-doors being only opened an hour or two at a time to enable hoses being shifted and fallen stuff removed. It has been found that where the heat had been communicated to the clay band which occurs between the coal-seams, difficulties were increased owing to the clay retaining the heat even when copiously treated with water. Heavy falls from roof have retarded progress, a thousand skips having been filled away from one fall alone. Tracks are being cut through falls in fire area and cooled down with water. No. 2 section: Robbing in the three seams being steadily prosecuted. Timber heavily used along the verge of broken roof in pillars. The opencast workings provide the larger proportion of output. Stripping exceptionally well kept ahead of advancing coal-face with consequent benefit in large proportionate tonnage of coal won. (4/12/1903): Pillaring and dropping head-coal in No. 2 section being well conducted. Air good. Fire now sufficiently overcome to allow of examination around and behind the fire area. The full supply of water, 1,000,000 gallons per diem, continues to be played on remaining falls showing any signs of heat. Tracks being cut through the heaps of fallen roof and sides and the fire area cooling down rapidly.

H.B. Mine, Nightcaps (J. W. Kelly, permit).—(22/10/1903): Underground working suspended in favour of paddocking. Stripping very heavy, consisting of from 10 ft. to 12 ft. of rough shingle. Coal 7 ft. in thickness. Mr. Kelly subsequently notified me that he had abandoned the mine.

Hit or Miss Mine, Nightcaps (Alley and Tinker; D. Tinker, permit).—(22/10/1903): Work temporarily suspended owing to Mr. Alley's death. Rearrangement of business interests in hand.

Wairio Mine, Nightcaps (A. McBride).—(22/10/1903): Opencast pit not yet in order after winter season.

Quested's Mine, Nightcaps (J. Quested).—(22/10/1903): Nothing doing at present.

Brighton's Pit, Nightcaps (J. Clarke).—(22/10/1903): Pit in good order. Seam dipping rapidly to westward.

Mount Linton Station Pit, Nightcaps (Mrs. Chalmers).—(22/10/1903): Nothing done here during the year.

Gillies and Rayward's Mine, Clifton, Seaward Bush.—(15/6/1903): Opencast. Stripping 5 ft. to 10 ft. of quartz gravels and clays. Lignite-seam 20 ft. in thickness, of good quality, containing thin seams of resin and shale. Being below country water-level, drainage heavy; kept under by 7 in. lifting-pump, steam-driven. Lignite conveyed on bush horse-tram one mile to district road.

Graham's Coal-mine, Fairfax (P. S. Graham).—(23/10/1903): Drives in good order, timbering being excellently done. Clay roof unbroken, precautions being taken of having timber kept close up to the faces.

Isla Bank Mine, Fairfax (M. Slattery).—(23/10/1903): Stripping heavy, 15 ft.; is kept well back from the face of the coal, which is only 5 ft. in thickness.

Spey Bank Mine, Fairfax (R. Salton).—(23/10/1903): Not working; plant drawn. Mr. Salton, one of the olden school of miners, being now incapacitated for work.

George's Mine, Fairfax (James George).—(23/10/1903): Opencast pit recently opened in a gully, where stripping is light.

Naylor's Mine, Fairfax (J. Naylor).—(23/10/1903): Private pit. Coal mined for own use only.

Orepuki Coal and Shale Mine, Orepuki.—(26/10/1903): Mine ceased work on the 17th July last. Shaft and mine-mouth fenced. Oil-works in charge of caretaker. (3/12/1903): Works still standing. Water rising slowly up the incline.

REMARKS.

The output of coal, lignite, and shale (Southern District) for the year 1903 amounted to 429,402 tons, an increase of 10,223 tons over the previous year.