

the whole property, smoke being visible at only one or two points. The Knight's party have recently opened out a section of superior household coal on the Venus lease, the small coal being now used at the Golden Fleece battery.

*Lankey's Creek Coal-mine* (owners, Watson and Pascoe).—(22/12/08): The development of this property continues to improve, and the construction of better roadways has received much attention, whilst an old abandoned pillar area has been recently opened, where it is expected to locate much solid coal. Ventilation and timbering are special features throughout the working, and the small coal for steaming purposes is in good demand.

*Progress Coal-mine, Reelfton*.—The quality of the coal having become worthless through faulting, operations are in the meantime abandoned.

*Loughnan's Coal-mine* (J. Billett, owner).—(21/12/08): As mentioned in previous report, this mine was shut down since change of ownership; but on suspension of operations at the Progress Coal-mine, operations were resumed to meet requirements at the Globe Mine. The quality of the coal is superior for steaming purposes to that formerly supplied. The working is in good order, and new iron tram-lines have been laid throughout. The first timber is standing, and in good order.

*Blackball Colliery* (owners, Blackball Coal Company (Limited); Walter Leitch, mining manager).—(18/12/08): Notwithstanding the loss in output in consequence of a prolonged strike, which extended over a period of eleven weeks, the gross tonnage—85,348 tons, for nine months only—shows a decrease of only 7,670 tons as against the previous year. Thus, according to the rate of production per week worked, a substantial increase is maintained, this being dependent on the ten-hour system of haulage mutually arranged between employer and worker. Fresh development is important, the total drivage on the winning levels being only 5 chains. This reduction of driving will not affect future output, and may be chiefly attributed to the extraordinary repairs effected towards the extension of the endless-rope haulage-line a further 35 chains, making the operative haulage system 90 chains in length from point of terminal to delivery at aerial tram-line. In referring to the new works under construction, and in connection with the Ngahere-Blackball Railway system, it is notable that, since the levels for sidings and site for storage-bins have been determined, the various works connected therewith are being actively pushed, and the time of completion is anticipated to be about that of the Government works. The computed capacity of the bins is 2,500 tons; the sorting and handling equipment will comprise the latest devices in tipplers, screens, and conveyors. The panel system of working continues to be a success in the dip section of the mine, particularly as heating in any district can be separately and promptly dealt with at a minimum of risk to the men engaged, and also at a much-reduced expenditure. Ventilation and timbering are attended to satisfactorily.

*Paparoa Coal-mining Company (Limited)* (J. T. Watson, mine-manager).—(17/12/08): The various works of development continue to be vigorously pushed, including railway-construction, rock-tunnelling, and coal-development. The lower incline tunnel has been completed at a total length of 20 chains, whilst the construction of the viaduct to connect with the Cliff Flat at the entrance of No. 2 tunnel is well advanced. In driving No. 2 tunnel the mine-manager has spared no effort to push the work ahead, with the expectation that a holding would be effected about the end of January, 1909; but, as driving from the Soldiers' Creek side of the range was compulsorily suspended owing to an inflow of water in the face, the burden of work is being done by rock-drills from the lower end, and on the 16th February, 1909, a holing was estimated at 200 ft. For the main ventilation scheme, a steam-driven single-inlet Sirocco fan, 105 in. diameter, with a computed capacity of 110,000 cub. ft. per minute, has been delivered, and the foundations and other preparatory works await its installation. The archway forming the entrance to the main return airway tunnel is a spacious and substantial structure, built of dressed red-pine blocks, rested on and covered with reinforced concrete. Also steel girders will take the place of timber to secure the main return airway to a finished sectional area of 10 ft. by 8 ft. Meantime, operations are ventilated by three separately installed Sirocco fans, with capacities varying from 3,000 cub. ft. to 7,000 cub. ft. per minute. Reports and other provisions of the Act are strictly enforced.

*North Brunner Coal Company (Limited)* (Arthur P. Harper, attorney, Greymouth).—Since Thornton's lease was taken over by this company, active prospecting has been carried out by a series of short drives, which aggregate to a total length of 450 ft., together with other important surface works, by which several outcrops have been exposed. On the hypothesis that these preliminary prospecting-works afford sufficient information to determine accurate data relative to the extent of the coal-bearing area and natural position of the 16 ft. seam, the management has commenced a rock tunnel (10 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in. in the clear) to intersect the seam at estimated distance of 375 ft., and at a point 400 ft. above sea-level. Including the bridge across the River Grey, the line of endless-rope haulage, calculated to connect the mine with the loading-station to be erected at Stillwater Junction, will be 67 chains in length on a gradient of 1 in 12 in favour of the load. At time of writing, tenders were called to bridge the River Grey, but so far nothing further has been done. Houses are being erected for the mine-manager and other officials in the township of Stillwater. Mr. Robert Wragg, late of New South Wales, has been appointed mine-manager.

*Brunner Mine* (owners, Point Elizabeth Railway and Coal Company (Limited); James Armstrong, mine-manager).—(17/12/08): With regard to the faulted character of the St. Kilda section of the lease, change in the geological conditions exposed was not important during the early months of the year—the only condition favourable to further prospecting was that sufficient width of coal was still available to push forward the winning-headings; when finally the pitch, thickness, and quality of the seam suddenly changed, with much improved working-conditions, especially in hardness of roof. Consequently, promise of future development has been more assured, and construction of storage-bins, screens, and other surface plant more actively pushed. Ventilation has also been much assisted by the installation of a Sirocco fan driven by water-power, and the output has considerably increased. Double-