

OUTPUT.

A marked increase has been obtained under this head. The quantity of coal won during the year from the mine was 60,464 tons 7 cwt., from which has to be deducted for mine consumption and waste 315 tons 10 cwt. 1 qr., leaving available for market 60,148 tons 16 cwt. 3 qr.

The bulk of the output has been won from the "New Area," fifteen pairs of coal-hewers being constantly employed therein, the balance being made up from the West section, South-east pillar section, north of Chasm Creek, and from the Bridge section, south of the same creek.

The briquette-works at Westport have proved to be a direct benefit to the mine, inasmuch as a quantity of fine coal—the result of rescreening the small to obtain screened nuts—viz., 11,888 tons—has been utilised in the manufacture of briquettes and eggettes, which would have otherwise been tipped to waste, on account of no market demand for this class of fine coal.

DAYS WORKED.

Not such good working-time has been experienced during the year, the total number of days worked—viz., 244½—being eleven less than were worked for the preceding year. Although the possible working-days would have numbered 274, the lost days are to be put down to unforeseen circumstances arising in the shipping arrangements, not for the want of a market.

The average number of days worked per week was 4·75, the miners' daily average wage 16s. 2d.; showing one hour per week less worked, and 1s. 6d. per day more than the preceding year.

The average number of men and boys ordinarily employed during the year was a hundred.

The accidents for the year were mostly of a trivial nature.

PLANT.

To more effectively improve the screened coal, and with an economical view also, a double-acting woven-wire mesh automatic jigging screen was installed at the bins, and the improvement in the sizing of the screened coal has been most marked, together with the dispensing with hand-labour, which was necessary on the old bar screens.

As development increased underground in the "New Area," better facilities for ventilation had to be adopted. A "Sirocco" fan of the single-inlet type, boiler, and engine, which were lying on the ground, have been set up for this purpose—substantially housed in a corrugated-iron shed—on the north bank of Chasm Creek. The fan has been running for two months, the results obtained being highly successful and satisfactory.

Taking advantage of the steam generated near the main entrance to the "New Area," a small winch for direct haulage has also been installed. This addition to the plant has superseded horse haulage in this part of the mine.

The working plant in and about the mine has been kept in an efficient state of repair.

UNDERGROUND WORKINGS.

The "New Area" district, as mentioned in my last year's report, has proved to be very successful, the main heading advancing a distance of 10 chains, the working-places right and left, and going in direction of same, opening out a working-face 12 chains in length, the coal being hard and of excellent quality. The ground worked approximates 8 acres in the first or solid working—i.e., 35 per cent. of the coal extracted—and the remainder is still standing as supporting pillars, which are extracted as a second working on the coming-back for the complete exhaustion of any area. A most pleasing feature is the freedom of the seam from floating boulders, or, as locally termed, "natives"—a characteristic which has obtained throughout the field, especially where the coal possessed an excellent quality and was of a hard nature. This freedom of stone has made the coal easier to "get" for the miner, as evidenced by the increased tonnage per miner per shift, which is 6·21 tons this year, as against 5·52 tons last year, with which is to be coupled a reduction in working-hours, consequent upon bank-to-bank legislation.

Operations in the other sections of the mine were: the extraction of pillars in the south-east district, east of the main haulage-road, the same in the far end of the old west district, and a small area of hard coal in the Bridge section.

No work of any kind has been done in Dove's section during the year, the extracting of the standing pillars being left for some future time, on account of the coal worked now being nearer to the haulage-road, of greater area, and less cost in production.

DEVELOPMENTS.

The chief work under this head has been the opening of the "New Area," of which there is an estimated extent of 35 acres. No faults have been met with in driving the main heading, excepting rolls in the floor, which are met with very frequently in many of the working-places. The working of this area has proved a great boon to the mine, the coal being of a good quality. It is hoped that the whole area will turn out as good, although nothing definite can be said until development proves such or otherwise, and development is being carried out with all possible despatch. Another development has been the driving through a fault in the West section to tap an area of about 10 acres lying between the first portion worked at the commencement of the mine, and the extracted pillars at the far end of the same section. The heading, after going through a faulted distance of 30 yards, proved the seam on the other side to be of a good hard quality. This was opened out, and yielded 30 tons per day for the closing six weeks of the year. As the heading goes forward, a larger quantity will be won. The rule that applies to the "New Area" also applies to this development.