

*Point Elizabeth State Colliery No. 1* (James Bishop, M.I.M.E., mining engineer and certificated manager).—During 1911 the output amounted to 188,892 tons, being 23,997 tons less than that obtained during the previous year. This decrease was probably due to slackness of trade during the earlier part of the year and to the delay in shipping owing to the unsatisfactory state of the Greymouth bar towards the close of the year.

No. 1 section (J. Coulthard, manager): With the exception of a very small quantity obtained during the development of the area on the inside of the fault lying to the east of the main dip, the output from this section has been obtained from pillar-extraction. The prospecting dip heading is a continuation of the crosscut, and is running south-east, and up to the present a good deal of faulted ground has been encountered, while the pitch of the seam is abnormal, lying about 1 in 1½. An east level has been turned away, and the possibility exists that a fair block of coal may be won therefrom. No. 2 level: This section has also contributed a small amount from solid workings. These workings, however, are thinning, and before long it is anticipated that the remainder will be won by longwall method. No. 3 level: The output from this section was from pillar-extraction, and practically all the coal is extracted with the exception of a strip left to support the edge of the fault. No. 1 level east: Workings in this level are also confined to pillar-extraction, and are fast becoming exhausted to a point where it will be necessary to stop in order to protect the main crosscut and return airways. The percentage of coal won from this level has been very high, almost the whole of the coal in the pillars being won. No. 1 level west: The whole of the available coal has been won from this section; sufficient, however, has been left for the stability of the main haulage-road. No. 3 level west: The pillars on the inside of No. 1 bank are being worked, and a good percentage of the coal has been extracted. During the year the water has risen to within half a chain of the third level, but it is anticipated that this portion will again be unwatered when the preparations that are in hand are completed. These consist of installing a beam pump, to be driven by steam, to unwater No. 2 section. The surplus of compressed air will then be available for the extra pumping in No. 1 section, when the few available pillars in the section known as the flat will in all probability be won. The ventilation I have found to be satisfactory, the quantity of air circulating on my last visit being 50,700 cubic feet per minute, which is split into two currents and well directed round the working-places. The mine is well timbered throughout, a large number of substantial chocks being built along the roadways, in addition to systematic propping of the roof. Safety-lamps are exclusively used for lighting in the workings, whilst all shot-firing is strictly in accordance with special rule 25 (d).

No. 2 section (W. Muncaster, deputy manager).—Two seams of coal are being worked in this section. The top seam, which varies in thickness from 10 ft. to 13 ft., is separated from the bottom seam by strata consisting of strong sandstone varying in thickness from 20 ft. to 30 ft. The whole of the output from the top seam is being obtained by pillar-extraction, a large proportion of the coal being successfully won. The bottom sections of the seam from the extended dip upwards to the second level are rapidly becoming exhausted, and by the end of the incoming year all the available coal will probably be extracted; while the pillars in the top level east will have reached a point where it will be necessary to suspend operations until the second level and the section of coal lying to the westward of the main haulage-road have been worked out. The bottom seam in the second level has been standing for some time, it being considered advisable to stop operations until the pillars overlying in the top seam were extracted. When this is done the bottom seam will be worked again. A large quantity of coal is being got from the bottom seam in the rise; a fault running east and west was encountered in the heading lying to the east of this section. The coal shows signs of thinning to such an extent on the western side of the main heading that in all probability it will prevent the profitable working of this portion. On striking the fault pillar-extraction was commenced, and still continues. The coal on the west side thinning to such an extent, it was considered advisable to alter the method of work from bord and pillar, and win the remaining coal by a long wall. Advancing midway between these two portions of this section the coal is still being worked in the solid, and from the appearance of the above-mentioned fault it is possible that one of the headings now being driven in the solid will miss it altogether. The fault shows indications as the workings expose it to the westward that it is rapidly becoming less formidable.

Heating was found to have commenced during the year in the goaf between the second and third levels east, a smell indicative of fire being easily detected in the air along the second level. This has compelled the management to erect brick stoppings across the two innermost openings along the low side. Towards the end of the year the aforementioned evidence became palpably stronger, compelling a series of stoppings to be built from the extended dip upwards, with the object of sealing this portion off altogether. Sufficient coal will be left to protect these stoppings, and pillar-extraction will be again commenced. The ventilation has been well maintained, a current of 49,750 cubic feet per minute entering the mine on the above date, while the working-places were adequately supplied. Timbering consists of substantial chocks, combined with a plentiful supply of props to support the roof.

*Point Elizabeth State Colliery No. 2* (James Bishop, mining manager).—Operations here consist solely of development-work, consisting of connecting the mine with endless-haulage system to the bins which are in course of erection at the terminus of the railway-line. The whole of the tunnelling in connection with this haulage system has been holed and thoroughly secured with substantial timber, and a matter of a few months ought to see the remaining viaduct, which is in course of erection at the upper end of the work, finished, as well as the permanent line of rails laid. The main level, which is situated on the right hand of Tarara Creek, has been driven a distance of 12 chains in good hard bituminous coal 14 ft. thick, while the rise heading has been extended to the outcrop a distance of approximately 6 chains. At the extreme end of the