

For the purpose of easy comparison the figures are restated below in tabulated form.

*Comparative Statement of Sales.*

Mine.	Total Sales for 1916.			Total Sales for 1917.		
	Quantity.		Value.	Quantity.		Value.
	Tons.	cwt. qr.	£ s. d.	Tons.	cwt. qr.	£ s. d.
Point Elizabeth ..	125,519	7 0	104,537 16 4	127,149	4 1	120,542 6 4
Liverpool ..	115,502	19 3	97,025 14 8	129,408	13 2	128,274 16 6
Totals ..	241,022	6 3	201,563 11 0	256,557	17 3	248,817 2 10

The average price per ton realized on the total sales was 19s. 4·76d., an increase of 2s. 8·05d. on last year's figures.

The sales of coal through the medium of the depots totalled 103,269 tons, value £141,606.

The demand for coal of every grade was exceptional throughout the year, and some difficulty was experienced in meeting requirements, especially during the closing months of the year, when the output was seriously restricted. But for this restriction a much larger tonnage would have been available for disposal, with a consequent decrease in the cost of production and a corresponding increase in profit.

It is gratifying to record that gas companies throughout the Dominion speak in the highest terms of praise in respect to the gas-producing qualities of Liverpool small coal, and the demand for this grade of coal at present exceeds the available supply.

In connection with the transport of coal it may be mentioned that the arrangements made by our contractors for the sea carriage of State coal were of a very satisfactory nature notwithstanding the abnormal conditions prevailing in shipping circles.

The cost of production at Point Elizabeth shows an increase of 8·26d. per ton, and at Liverpool of 7·56d. per ton, over last year's figures, due largely to the go-slow policy adopted by the miners.

The report of the Manager of the collieries gives full information in respect to the working of each mine and other details relative thereto.

The following items taken from the balance-sheet are of interest as indicating the scope of operations and for reference in respect to the present position of the Capital Account, reserve funds, and other accounts shown therein :

	£
The total amount paid as war bonus was ... ..	9,239
The amount written off for depreciation for the year was ... ..	12,229
The payments for interest totalled ... ..	8,715
The payments for sea carriage of coal amounted to ... ..	71,120
The cost of railway haulage amounted to ... ..	26,655
The total wages paid for coal-winning was ... ..	77,751
The amount paid for management and office salaries (Head Office and mines) totalled ... ..	2,477
The gross capital expenditure on the whole undertakings to 31st March last was ... ..	350,712
The total depreciation written off to date amounts to ... .. (equal to 53·54 per cent. on the gross capital expenditure as above)	187,798
The debenture and loan capital stands at ... ..	227,601
The sinking fund is in credit ... ..	13,200
The reserve fund stands at ... ..	5,884
The amount at debit of Profit and Loss Account is ... .. (last year, £34,946)	16,424
The cash in hand and in Public Account at 31st March last was ... .. (last year, £34,751)	68,018
The present net book value of permanent or fixed assets (exclusive of floating assets) is ... ..	157,123

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge the services of the Accountant, Depot Managers, and staffs for loyal and efficient co-operation in the conduct of the business under sometimes difficult and trying circumstances.

I have, &c.,

F. J. GUNN, Sales Manager.