

*New Zealand State Coal-mines.*

*Liverpool Colliery.*—No. 1 Section: The solid work in the upper seam, on the east side of the Seven-mile Creek, was completed during the year, and the pillars are now being won. Work on the west side of the creek ceased early in the year.

*Morgan Seam:* The east side workings in the Morgan seam proved very disappointing, the seam being split up by bands of stone which gradually thickened as driving proceeded. The main east level was stopped just after crossing under Puru Creek. The headings to the rise on the east side have also entered the stony area. On the west side the coal is fairly clean, and averages about 8 ft. in thickness. Firedamp was reported in the Morgan seam workings on forty-three occasions during the year. The low-level stone drive to the Morgan seam was stopped on the 7th April owing to firedamp and the lack of suitable permitted explosives for stonework. This drive intersected a coal-seam 11 ft. thick, but rather dirty.

On the 31st May a boiler-attendant, Thomas Fisher, after starting the electric motor to drive a fan at the stone-drive entrance went to oil the fan-bearing; the lighted slush-lamp which he was carrying ignited, inflammable gas being drawn through the ventilating-pipes by the fan, and he received burns about the head and arms, but fortunately not of a serious nature.

*Steam-hoist:* Since the 30th August the persons working at the Nos. 1 and 3A sections have been regularly conveyed by a car up an incline by rope haulage actuated by steam-power from the traffic road, and near the Rewanui Railway-station, to the middle brake, a distance of 24 chains, and rising 1 in 3½.

No. 3A Section: Pillar-extraction will soon be completed in the 3A section. A high percentage of the coal has been won.

No. 3 Section: The solid work in this section is also finished, and the pillar-extraction is proceeding apace. Most of the remaining coal is less than 5 ft. in thickness.

*Point Elizabeth Mine.*—This mine ceased production on the 20th March, and was finally sealed off on the 31st March, 1920.

*James Mine.*—A level stone drive, at an altitude of 200 ft. above sea-level, pierced the coal-seam when in 15 chains. The seam is rather dirty, and is only from 2½ ft. to 3 ft. in thickness, but as driving proceeds it will thicken and become cleaner. A return airway is now being made at an angle of 45° through the overlying stone, from a point about a chain to the east of the main drive.

*Grey Valley Coalfield.*

*Paparoa Colliery.*—On the 3rd February a strike occurred regarding taking the tare of the mine-tubs. The miners desired the weights taken on the previous pay-Saturday, and the management on the following pay-Saturday. The miners obtained work elsewhere, and no more coal was produced from the mine during the year. A settlement was arrived at during December, and work recommenced on the 5th January, 1921.

*Blackball Colliery.*—All production at the Blackball Mine during the past year was obtained from the No. 1 rise section and the No. 9 dip section. Owing to the heated area near the D-level workings east of No. 17 incline giving trouble, it was found necessary to build two strong dams. Nos. 4 and 5 inclines in the No. 1 rise section have reached the outcrop, and to the east of No. 5 incline troubled ground was met. A fault—between the main and back levels in the No. 9 dip section—continues to run almost parallel with these places. The main dip has progressed slowly, and is now 11 chains below the No. 9 haulage-road. The method of working top coal has been modified, the places being restricted to 18 ft. in width, and timber supports are put up under the overhanging lip. A double-inlet sirocco fan, 7 ft. in diameter, has been procured, and will be installed during the coming year. Owing to the area near the present fan-house being restricted, considerable preparatory work is necessary.

*North Brunner Mine.*—At this colliery activities ceased towards the end of the year.

*St. Kilda Mine (Brunner).*—The end of this mine is fast approaching: only about two months' further output is available. The railway-bridge over the Grey River having been condemned by the Railway Department as unsafe, the small output has to be stored in the bins until the bridge is repaired, or some other means of transit for the coal is devised.

*Dobson Mine.*—A dip drive at a grade of 1 in 3 is now 4 chains down. The management anticipates that the Brunner seam will be intersected at a distance of 1,200 ft. A small area of coal, at altitudes varying from 700 ft. to 900 ft. above sea-level has been prospected, and gravity planes have been constructed to convey this coal to the level of the mouth of the dip drive. The coal in this area is very soft and steeply inclined.

*Reefton District.*

The output from the Reefton mines was substantially increased during the year.

*Reefton Coal Company's Mine.*—Pillaring was commenced in the rise workings. A crosscut was driven in the coal going to the dip, but so far has proved rather disappointing, the coal becoming very soft and of poor quality. The roof is a very soft sandstone. The dip of the seam is now at right angles to the line of the crosscut. Very little work has been done in the 5 ft. seam.

*Ferndale-Timaru Mine (formerly Lockington's).*—The year's output from this mine was chiefly obtained from pillar-extraction. Where the overburden is shallow stripping operations have been resorted to and the coal then worked opencast. A dip drive was commenced near the lower section and good coal was met, but dipping rather steeply (about 1 in 2). Heating occurred on the 16th November in a fall in a goaf to the north-east of the main stone drive. A hand-pump was used to pump water on to the heated debris, and the fire was eventually got under control.