

Blackball Mine. As the No. 4 workings and old workings of No. 5 heading are connected, it was found impracticable to effectively seal off the heading workings as the roof and sides were crushed. Two stoppings of clay were therefore erected in the main intake and return respectively. Three working-places were sealed off as the result of this heating.

Wareatea Mine, Coalbrookdale.—On the 22nd November, 1923, a heating in the extended section of the Wareatea Mine developed into active fire, but was successfully sealed off with brick and concrete stoppings.

Fatal Accidents.

Four fatalities occurred in the West Coast Inspection District during the year, all of which were due to falls of coal.

On the 15th May a miner named James Seddon was killed in the Cascade Mine by a fall of side coal. Deceased and his mate were engaged splitting a pillar, and had fired a shot 4 ft. from the bottom. Seddon was engaged cutting the top coal when a bump dislodged a lump of coal from the rib side; the coal struck deceased on the back of the head and broke his neck.

On the 24th May a man named Albert Ambrose Wells was killed by a fall of coal while dropping tops in the Reefton Coal Company's mine at Burke's Creek. Deceased and his mate had removed part of the tops when the remainder came away, suddenly striking Wells and breaking his neck.

On the 19th July a miner named A. Baker was killed by a fall of top coal in the Morgan seam, Liverpool Collieries. Deceased and his mate were engaged dropping tops when a bump occurred, dislodging coal from the rib side, which, striking a set, knocked it out; the top coal then fell, striking Baker and breaking his neck.

An accident that resulted in the death of a miner named Martin Tomic occurred in the Millerton Mine on the 15th August. Deceased was engaged dropping top coal, and was standing on a pile of loose coal when a fall from the roof caught him, inflicting injuries which resulted in his death some days later.

Serious Non-fatal Accidents.

On the 23rd May an accident occurred in the Old Mine, Stockton, whereby an underviewer named Sidney A. Fox had his left hand badly shattered. Fox was straightening out the lead of an electric detonator when it exploded with the above result.

On the 26th May, in the Paparoa Mine, a miner named R. Manzoni was filling from the bottom of a large pile of loose coal when a lump rolled from the top and struck his leg, causing a simple fracture.

Prosecutions.

During the year the following informations were laid :—

Mr. E. W. Tattley, manager, Reefton Coal Company, was proceeded against under section 10 of the Coal-mines Act, 1922, for failing to examine the Reefton Coal Company's mine at Burke's Creek within two hours of the commencement of the afternoon shift. In this case the manager was acting as fireman-deputy. He was convicted and fined £5 and costs. Mr. Tattley was also proceeded against under section 22 of the Second Schedule for failing to appoint a sufficient number of competent persons to act as deputies at the mine, and was convicted and ordered to pay costs. Information was also laid against him under section 23 of the Second Schedule for allowing workmen to proceed to work before the mine had been inspected, but this charge was withdrawn.

Richard Currie, collier, Reefton Coal Company, was proceeded against under section 31 of the Second Schedule for entering the mine before it had been intimated to him by the fireman-deputy that the mine had been examined. On pleading guilty he was ordered to pay costs, 7s.

Information was also laid against Percy Stone, miner, of the Millerton Mine, that on the 5th September, he did have in his possession matches and tobacco in a part of the Millerton Mine where safety-lamps were used. On pleading guilty he was fined £1 and ordered to pay costs.

SOUTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (MR. GEORGE DUGGAN, Inspector).

Mount Torlesse Collieries.—Two seams are now being worked at this mine. In the rise section the main seam pillars are almost exhausted. In the dip section places are being driven in the No. 2 seam, and a short stone drive is going to the west to intersect the main seam. This drive is ventilated by a 25 in. Sirocco fan connected to wooden boxes. In consequence of small quantities of inflammable gas having been found in the dip section safety-lamps are now in use there. The old dip—further to the westward—is still showing signs of fire, but the lower part of these workings is now flooded.

Springfield Mine.—No coal has been produced since September, and the dip is now full of water.

Homebush Colliery.—Two men are mining fireclay in the fireclay section, and two others are down a short steep dip on pillar-extraction. There is only one row of pillars remaining, and it is intended to drive another dip to get at some other pillars a good distance away. The seam is about 2½ ft. in thickness.

Bush Gully Mine.—Although most of the colliery plant has been removed, three miners are extracting some remaining pillars in the very steep seam, which is 3½ ft. in thickness. As the old mine-entrance was not covered, the miners were instructed to erect a fence around it.

St. Helens Mine.—A short steep dip was driven 35 yards until it cut the bottom seam, 6 ft. in thickness. A level has been driven about 3 chains in length alongside old workings. This level has been securely timbered throughout. An incline will be driven to the full rise (1 in 3) to the outcrop for ventilation, and will later be used for haulage purposes.

Steventon Mine.—The main dip is down 500 ft., the upper 400 ft. at the grade of 1 in 2 and the remainder 1 in 3. The seam is 5½ ft. in thickness. A downthrow fault was met at 430 ft. from the surface, and, although the coal is fairly clean at the face of the main dip, the places to the south are becoming very stony. The places on the north side met dirty coal when 9 chains in, and they were stopped on that account. These pillars are now being split.

Clearview Mine.—The main level is now in about 17 chains from the surface. An incline has been driven 3 chains up from the level, and is expected to reach the outcrop in another chain. This will considerably improve the ventilation. The seam is about 10 ft. thick, but only about 6 ft. is being worked. The level places are being driven 7 ft. wide and the inclines 9 ft. wide. Very little blasting is required, and the mine is in very good order.

Tripp's Mine.—This mine has been taken over by the Burnwell Coal Company, and is now worked in conjunction with the Burnwell Mine.

Burnwell Mine.—Development has continued in the two upper seams of lignite, which are both about 7 ft. in thickness. The bottom seam, which varies considerably, being sometimes 11 ft. thick, is not being worked owing to stone bands. All places are driven narrow, 6 ft. to 7 ft., and about 6 ft. in height. Ventilation good.

Cavendish Mine.—A small output was produced from this mine during the latter half of the year.

Albury Mine.—The output is now very small, as only a man and a boy are employed. The places going north have reached dirty coal containing many clay breaks, and these places have been stopped. The places going to the east are cleaner, but they cannot proceed far before reaching the line of the traffic-road. The old workings to the west are on fire, and, as there is not much cover, it cannot be sealed off to extinguish it.

Allanholme Mine.—The small output was steadily maintained during the year to supply Waimate and the surrounding district. The surface equipment has been overhauled recently and the necessary repairs made.

Meadowbank Mine.—Another small mine which supplies Waimate with lignite. Worked intermittently.

Wharekuri Mine.—The workings in the upper section are nearly exhausted. A tunnel is being driven at a lower level, and the highly inclined seam is expected to be met at 180 yards. The drive is now in about 50 yards.