

inclines, and to allow the roof to fall. In this way the top coal over the bottom bords is made ready to be taken down and filled away. In the bottom west level a roll on the pavement was met, which made it necessary to cut down the floor for a considerable distance, so as to maintain level to the bottom of the coal, in view of keeping a uniform grade for the future extension of the engine-haulage. At present preparatory work is being pushed forward to extend the haulage 600 ft. on this level. Originally the surface chimney of the ventilating-furnace was built with wood, which was taken down during the year, and rebuilt with brick to a height of 35 ft. This addition to the heated column has increased the air-volume 2,000 ft., which gives an average air-measurement of 16,500 cubic feet per minute. The principle of ventilation is a direct air-current. No return airways are required. Mine reports kept to date. Warning and signal boards placed at all stations. No accidents are reported. Four inspections.

Brunner Colliery Dip Mine.—(13/12/98): The chief source of supply is from the removal of pillars, which are worked from both sides of the engine haulage-road. During heavy rains considerable expenditure was incurred in baling from the bottom dip to the pumps on account of the large inflow of water that percolated through the broken overlying strata, a trouble which is common in this district after pillars are exhausted. However, as the workings advanced towards the pumps this extra cost was dispensed with, as the pumps were capable of dealing with the growth. After baling was laid aside the management was in a position to double-shift the faces, thus affording an opportunity of largely increasing the output of coal from the lower workings. As the general character of the Brunner roof is a hard sandstone grit, no serious difficulty, apart from water, is experienced to win the full percentage of coal at a minimum risk to life and property. In the development of the Barrier pillar, which divides the rise- and dip-workings, satisfactory progress has been made in cutting levels to the far end of it. By means of these levels the coal will be conveyed as the workings are brought back. The ventilation is strictly attended to, and all necessary precautions are taken to guard against the accumulation of gas. Returns and all places over falls tested and found clear. Lead-locked Marsaut safety-lamps are in use from the mine-mouth. Reports are strictly kept, and other provisions of the Act enforced. Air-measurement, 16,000 cubic feet per minute. Seven inspections made. On the 10th May William McLuskie, a water-baler, sustained fracture of both legs by a runaway pair of wheels and axle on the dip-incline, and on the 12th November the same person had his right leg broken by falling on the rail whilst hanging on the "jock" at the back end of the engine-race.

Brunner Rise Mine.—(14/12/98): Since this mine was opened operations were carried on by two shifts up to the month of July, but from that time a single shift has been adopted. The supply of coal is won from the extraction of pillars, of which the working area is now confined to No. 1 block. When the mine was developed the coal in this district was only partly worked; therefore, to provide a roadway that would exhaust the coal next to the cliff it was necessary to reopen No. 1 incline. To carry out this work a substantial, heavy-timbered roadway was made, and relaid with a double line of tramway up to the solid face, the coal being lowered by means of a self-acting incline. From this landing a second heading was driven that connects with the rise adit-level, which provides a second outlet and also a direct air-return. As the western faces approach the cliff the roof is of a broken character, and more than ordinary care in timbering the faces is required by the miners. The roadways and faces are safe, and every attention is given by the management to win the highest percentage of coal from the pillars. Manager's and firemen's books kept to date. Gas not reported. For some months past two men have been prospecting a piece of coal that lies between the two mines and outcrops to the terrace. At present the prospects of obtaining solid coal are unfavourable, and do not warrant the construction of a separate tramway to the shoots. A miner named Samuel Groom had his leg broken by a piece of stone falling from the roof whilst engaged putting up a set of timber at the face. Seven inspections made.

Coal Creek.—(18/11/98): During the year prospecting and development on this property have been at a standstill. Some of the outcrop that is cut into for short distances shows splendid samples of high-class coal. The bridge across the Grey River is being actively pushed forward. Mr. Alison informs me that this work is now completed.

ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES.

8th February.—Coalbrookdale: An authorised shot-firer named Alexander Nicol received injuries, which terminated fatally, from an explosion of blasting-powder that he was carrying loose in a tamping-box, which was strictly against orders.

10th May.—Brunner Dip Mine: A water-baler named William McLuskie had both his legs broken by a pair of runaway truck-wheels and axle on dip incline.

12th November.—Brunner Dip Mine: William McLuskie (the same person) had his right leg broken by falling on the rail whilst hanging on the "jock" at the back of the engine-race.

14th November.—Brunner Rise: A miner named Samuel Groom had his leg broken by a piece of stone falling from the roof in the working-face.

23rd September.—Westport-Cardiff: A stone-drive contractor named Walter Bird had his right leg broken while he was engaged putting up a heavy set of timber.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The output for the present year shows an increase on the preceding year of 34,292 tons; and, being guided by the projected and active developments that are being pushed vigorously forward, particularly in the Westport district, we may anticipate a progressive increase on our future outputs.