

The proposal can be reconsidered, if necessary, at a later stage, when the data obtained from the prospecting programme will be useful.

During the year further electrical underground extension has been carried out, and with electric winches now on order it is intended to replace compressed-air equipment wherever possible.

The main haulage has also been improved by installing a more powerful motor and control gear, and this haulage has been extended, and a further extension will follow when the lower section of the main heading is reconditioned.

The aerial ropeway has operated satisfactorily, and with the addition of fifty new bucket bodies its capacity increased, while a new 6 ft. rope-wheel complete with bearings has been installed to adjust a defect in the original plant.

The railway weighbridge, which had been irregular in action, was reconstructed in steel framing throughout and reinstalled in a new site in a substantial concrete pit, and it should give years of useful service.

No accident of a serious nature occurred during the year, nor was any major mining irregularity experienced.

A shortage of experienced shiftmen has been felt, and the absenteeism in an increasing degree was ever present.

WAITEWHENA OPENCAST

Coal-winning.—The net output for the year was 21,629 tons 11 cwt. 2 qr., a decrease of 1,568 tons 12 cwt. 2 qr. when compared with the previous year.

The following statement shows details of coal disposed of during the year:—

1st April, 1946—	Tons. cwt. qr.	Tons. cwt. qr.
Stock on hand	..	..
Add net output for year ..	21,629 11 3	21,629 11 3
Less stock on hand, 31st March, 1947 ..	..	..
Total disposed of	..	21,629 11 3

The net output from the colliery since its inception amounts to 63,712 tons 3 cwt. 1 qr.

Workings.—In the early part of the year a regular output was obtained from the No. 1 Area in the Lee Creek, while stripping operations with good results were undertaken in No. 2 Area, which is estimated to yield 11,700 tons.

During the late winter's extremely wet weather, creep of overburden continually interfered with these operations, resulting in irregular poor output, even when additional earth-work machines were introduced, and in September it was decided to cease production until the road to the No. 2 Area, where a reserve of stripped coal of 35,000 tons was available, could be completed.

This access, commenced early in July, on account of the atrocious weather and sloppy conditions causing numerous obstacles, was not workable until October, when production resumed from a strip of coal cleared along the escarpment from the graded section of the road.

Gradually increasing returns, from removal of the seam and extension of the road along the outcrop to No. 2 Area, were had, and production from this area commenced in November and has been regularly maintained, with increasing output.

With a peak of 220 tons, an output of approximately 160 tons daily has been produced, while reserves have been increased. They are now estimated at 43,000 tons.

With machines operating on top of the coal-seam, former difficulties with stripping of overburden will be considerably lessened, and the changed system of grab and navvy, combined with truck transport of spoil to a good dump on the steep escarpment, can be undertaken at all times, where formerly bulldozers and carryalls proved unworkable.

Bins and the necessary screening-plant are now under construction at the railway siding, and this, when completed, will be an improvement on the present bar-screen at the mine and enable graded coal of superior quality to be produced.