

All development to the south is in excellent coal with the seam inclination in the lower levels flattening to 38 degrees, compared with 78 degrees in the upper workings of the mine.

Pillaring has been continued in the two lower north levels adjacent to the cross-faulting previously mentioned, with a suitable system of chutes, ladderways, and goaf blockages giving very satisfactory results.

It is intended in the near future to introduce electric drilling-machines, which, for this class of coal and high inclination of the seam, should be a decided improvement.

Lucknow Clay-pit (W. G. Smith (Deputy), Manager).—Work of an intermittent nature has been undertaken, with operations confined to extracting the pillar to the rise of the trucking road, the amount of which is very limited.

Only a small output has been won, and it would appear that this special clay is mined to suit blending requirements at the pottery-works, which firm also works other clay deposits, with the workmen transferring as required.

Stecenton Colliery (H. J. Robb (Underviewer), Manager).—Retreating from the dip, with a restricted width, has continued with satisfactory results and good extraction from the 6 ft. seam, while under favourable conditions reasonable recovery is also had from the 3 ft. seam which lies immediately above.

The coal is of excellent quality and commands a ready market.

The retreat has now reached the ninth level, and as the width of the pillars along the dip is narrow, excessive floor heave is experienced adjacent to the pillar places, and changes in the method of lifts and extraction are being tried to counter this to the best advantage.

Mount Somers Mine (R. R. Beckley (Deputy), Manager).—Development, combined with pillaring, continued during the major portion of the year, but towards the end of the term pillar work ceased.

Good extraction was obtained from pillar splits, lifts, and top coal, the latter usually about 10 ft. in thickness, to a good parting, and leaving a 1 ft. to 18 in. layer to hold the firm fireclay and sandy roof.

The places stand well, with the overburden closing the goaf immediately behind the line of retreat.

A coal-stone band flanking the former main road has been pierced and development continued in this direction in good coal, but the fault to the north-west limits the area available for the time being.

An upthrow fault 10 ft. to 12 ft. has been tested, with conditions looking promising, and new places are opening out in this direction.

Blackburn Nos. 1 and 2 Mines (W. L. Workman (Deputy), Manager).—In the No. 1 Mine, work is confined to pillar-extraction of the small area remaining to be worked adjacent to the haulage road.

Seasonal trade and absence of an employee has caused the mine to operate intermittently, for with the mines adjoining the men transfer as required.

No. 2 Mine: Development has continued in this small block with satisfactory results, but the main level should soon hole through to the opposite side of the knoll, and as the area to the rise is limited by a large fault, pillar-work will have to commence very soon.

The strike of the seam has been more regular of late, with the coal showing a lesser number of shaken quality, patches, and in the main being of good hard quality, with the places standing well.

Newbarn Mine (T. Graham (Deputy), Manager).—Operations of a very minor nature were undertaken, and on my recent visit the rails and gear had been brought out of the tunnel.

The general appearance was that the area as a mining concern had been abandoned, although from the sand-pit adjacent to the portal a small output had been won.

Woodbank Mine (Albury) (J. H. Smillie (Deputy), Manager).—Early in the year heating caused the area to the west side of the dip to be sealed, and a new return air-course on the east side had to be formed, and a 24 in. Torpedo type of fan, electrically driven, installed.

Following the formation of the new air-course, extension of the dip commenced with the object of opening out a pair of levels to each side and forming a sump.

A shortage of experienced men has retarded this programme, but the required dip development should soon be completed and faces handy to the dip haulage available.

NORTH OTAGO DISTRICT

These mines are all small concerns employing from 2 to 6 men.

Willott's Mine (M. H. Wilson (Permit), Manager).—Operations are confined to pillar-extraction, which from splitting and lifts good extraction is obtained, with the soft sandstone overburden closely packing the goaf immediately behind the line of faces.

The seam at present is 7 ft. to 8 ft. in thickness in two distinct layers of good coal, the upper 3 ft. of darker colour and superior quality being overlain by a band of hard coal-stone, with well-defined partings at the top and bottom of this 3 ft. layer of coal.

The width of retreating face is narrow, but with the small output—I pair of miners—the retreat is regular but slow.