

Airedale Mine (R. A. Adcock (Deputy), Manager).—Pillaring from the dip continued during the early part of the year, with the width of face, one pillar to the left and two on the opposite side of the dip drive, and by splitting narrow and taking lifts, good extraction was obtained.

On Sunday, 6th June, smoke was observed coming from the fan shaft, and after locating the fire, which had travelled up the return some 5 chains, the mine was sealed at each entrance and the men accommodated in St. Andrews Mine, of similar ownership.

The recovery and isolation of the fire was undertaken at the end of the month under my supervision and with equipment from the Ohai Rescue Station, but as the fire had travelled some distance in the return air-course the imprisoned smoke and gases had created an ideal situation, and recovery was accomplished with safety and no inconvenience.

The location of the seat of the fire was found to be a pillar crack adjacent to a stopping of lower sealing, with the fire burning past the side of this stopping, but as all places were small—6 ft. by 6 ft. the equipment (Blowman and smoke-masks) was only required for the temporary seal, and the three permanent seals were completed that evening.

An inspection the following day by me revealed all in order, and reconditioning work commenced, with production following.

Development to the north from the South Dip, where work ceased in 1937 owing to inferior coal, was started, the extent of poor outcrop coal, due to a surface depression, being small, and good coal was soon struck.

The programme is to extend this South Dip to intersect a pair of levels from the other dip, the position of which faces is in advance of the South Dip bearing, and to develop to the north and west.

St. Andrews Mine (J. H. Nimmo (Deputy), Manager).—Pillar work has continued with excellent extraction, by very narrow splits and lifts, with good roof control and a closely sand-packed goaf following withdrawal of the props, immediately behind the pillar lifts.

The area is small and retreat is now almost to the fan shaft, but suitable provision for future ventilation and protection of the shaft have been established, and goaf seals maintained.

Ngapara Mine (C. J. M. Nimmo (Permit), Manager).—Operations are solely pillar-extraction, which work commenced for the first time in this mine, towards the end of 1947 from the north-east corner on northern boundary, and as its history dates back some seventy years or more, pillaring will continue for many years.

From the seam, 24 ft. in thickness, by narrow splits and loose-end lifts, with extraction of top-coal simultaneously, good results are obtained, while the fine glauconitic sands overlying a thick bed of pipe-clay ensure a closely packed goaf a short distance behind the face.

This sand, which, following the first pillar roof-breaks, was wet and spilled freely into the workings, has now dried out, but the system of precautionary board barricades in roadways close seam to the faces is still maintained for safety.

Rockdale Mine (Herbert) (D. Gaudion (Deputy), Manager).—Development to the south with a pair of headings parallel with, but well in advance of, the main tunnel has continued, with the seam 12 ft. in thickness to a good coal-stone parting, which roof stands well.

The seam is of hard clean coal which commands a ready local sale, while the system of narrow development places 6 ft. by 8 ft. with 50 ft. pillars, is prudent.

Shag Point (A. K. McLean (Underviewer), Manager).—Early in the year, following the change of ownership, a more active policy was introduced with a view to recovering pillars left towards the foot of the dip and for further development work.

Simultaneously with surface rearrangements and extension of the road to the mine portal, reconditioning of the dip was commenced and good progress made for the first 4 chains, from which point difficulties were experienced, while advancement of the pump suction, owing to floor heave, also retarded progress. At a point 9 chains from the portal where the original dip drive had a slight bend to the north it was decided to deviate slightly to the south, and the face of the dip is now within this line of pillars, while by coupling the suction to the original pump column left *in situ* by the former owners water difficulties were overcome.

Recovery has been made for upwards of 11 chains, at which point the pillars to the south side are standing well, although the former dip drive, which has been well robbed, has collapsed in part. A further 5 chains remains to be completed to reach the bottom of the old dip, where good coal of 8 ft. to 9 ft. in thickness was present when development ceased.

A new air-shaft, 60 ft., has been sunk and arranged as a second egress from a more suitable point.

The information obtained from the former owner and from the mine plan has not been in keeping with data furnished by the work of recovery, which has been a tedious, dirty, and difficult underliaking.

CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT

Coal Creek (N. J. Harliwich (Permit), Manager); *Oturehua* (H. R. Upston (Permit), Manager); *Cambrian* (D. Jones (Permit), Manager); *Belmont* (G. W. Johnston (Permit), Manager); *Idaburn* (J. S. Murray (Permit), Manager).—Opencast operations, mainly to meet local requirements, have been continued on similar lines to those of previous years at the above pits, but a lessened demand for this class of fuel is being experienced, and activity over the last six months at Belmont Pit has been negligible.