

The briquette-works manufactured briquettes and eggettes, which were disposed of to—railways, 7,343 tons; depots, 1,129 tons; other Government Departments, 4 tons; private consumers, 88 tons: total, 8,564 tons.

The decrease of 23,254 tons in the sales from Seddonville is accounted for by the paucity of hard coal in the present workings, and that in the previous year a great deal of soft coal was sold for bunker purposes, on account of a scarcity of this class of coal having been caused by the Newcastle strike. Development is proceeding, and it is expected that more hard coal is likely to come to hand shortly.

The briquette-works: The demand for briquettes and eggettes has been increasing, but these works are only auxiliary to the mine, inasmuch as they provide a channel for the utilization of small coal, and are only worked when there is an overplus of that class at Seddonville Mine.

Of the total quantity of coal handled, the Railway Department had 33,796 tons screened, 2,839 tons screened nuts, 30,366 tons unscreened, and 7,343 tons briquettes and eggettes, but only 7 tons of small; whereas other consumers had 96,893 tons steam and small coal. The railway coal is sold freight paid to Wellington or elsewhere, but the steam and small is mostly sold f.o.b. Greymouth.

The sum of £59,206 7s. was paid for steamer freight.

Coal supplied to depots shows an increase notwithstanding the warm, dry weather experienced during the year.

All circumstances being considered, the mines have had fairly regular work.

The development-works at the Point Elizabeth No. 2 Mine are being pushed on, and it is hoped that coal will be available for market within the current year, or shortly after.

The ways, working-plant, &c., about the mines are being maintained in good order.

I am pleased to be able to report that the officers and men connected with the various branches of this industry have all worked energetically and well.

Attached are the reports of the Managers at Point Elizabeth and Seddonville, giving necessary detailed information.

As forecasted in my report last year, I have to state that the cost of winning and hauling coal to the bins is now so high that it has been found necessary to raise the price of coal to consumers. As this increase was made towards the end of the year its effect upon the sales is not yet very apparent, but during the current year it should provide a reasonable margin to cover working-expenses, depreciation, and contingencies.

I have, &c.,

W. C. GASQUOINE,
General Manager.

The MANAGER, Point Elizabeth State Coal-mine, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Mines Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Greymouth, 12th May, 1911.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the working of the Point Elizabeth State Collieries for the year ended 31st March, 1911.

NO. 1 COLLIERY.

Coal-winning.

The gross total output for the year was 221,990 tons, of which the separate sections, Nos. 1 and 2 of the colliery, yielded respectively 101,127 and 120,863 tons; and after deducting mine consumption and waste there remained available for market 209,253 tons. The colliery worked on 230 days; thus the net average daily output was 908 tons, or 17 tons per working-day greater than for the year 1909-10. The balance of the possible working-time is accounted for as follows: Pay Saturdays, 26 days; other union holidays, 18; cavilling, 2; bar-blocks, 11; want of shipping, 17; time lost through fatal accidents, 8; the King's death, 1: total, 83 days.

The gross total output since the starting of the colliery in 1904 amounts to 1,322,131 tons.

The employees averaged 474 during the year, made up of—coal-miners, 201; truckers and other adult labour underground, 169; youths, 7; surface labour—adults, 71; boys, 26.

The colliery worked an average of 4.42 days per week, and the payments on account of wages, exclusive of stores and compensation, amounted to £69,221 4s. 7d.

Underground Exploration.

The bulk of the output has for some time been obtained from the extraction of pillars in both sections of the colliery; but exploration by boring has proved that the bottom seam (a small area of which was found in No. 1 section and worked out) extends over a very considerable area in the No. 2 section, mainly to the rise of the present upper levels. The thickness of this seam varies from 4 ft. to over 6 ft., with an average of about 5 ft.; and the workings already opened out in it are capable of producing 250 tons daily. The effect of this development means the continuance of output from this section of the colliery for a much longer period than previously calculated, and, as the bulk of the area in which this coal is found is on the rise of present water-level, the coal will be won without pumping.

Surface Works and Surveys.

The whole of the plant, machinery, and buildings have been maintained in good order and condition. The new air-compressor and boilers which were procured to enable the increased water to be dealt with have worked continuously since their installation, and the difficulty has been effectively overcome.