

haulage-road, while on the west side good coal is opening all along the barrier pillar which separates the above property from the Millerton Colliery, but it will not be long before pillar-extraction will have to be commenced, as the solid workings are nearly all completed in this section. A water drive has been constructed for use during pillar-extraction.

C tunnel: The whole of the workings in this section are in the solid, but pillar-extraction will begin shortly. The seam varies from 12 ft. to 16 ft. in thickness.

D tunnel: Operations in this tunnel were discontinued during July. The heading going south is standing in faulted ground. The workings on the west side are in soft coal 10 ft. thick.

Prospecting with a diamond drill and three hand-boring plants has been carried out on the eastern sections known as "E" and "F," comprising some 1,600 acres. It is reported that a large area of hard coal of workable thickness has been proved. Boring is still in progress. Surveys are being made to ascertain the best route for haulage from the newly developed area.

The ventilation of the various sections I have found to be satisfactory.

Puponga Colliery (Puponga Coal Company, Limited, owners; R. McEwan, mine-manager).—During the year four inspections were made, the last being on the 7th November. The output for the year shows a decrease of about 8,000 tons. This is accounted for by the very poor trade during the first four months, combined with a stoppage of eight days during the coastal shipping dispute, and seven days for repairs to boilers. With the exception of the above stoppages the mine has worked full time since the property changed hands on the 8th May. The main dip has been extended for a distance of 3 chains, and converted into a water-lodgment. The main haulage dip was deviated about 45 degrees to the eastward, on account of the faulty ground that gradually encroached from the westward. This deviation has developed good coal, and present indications point to the possibility of a valuable field being proved by further development, but no advance boring has been done. No fatal accident occurred during the year; minor accidents only numbered seven, compared with seventeen for previous year. The ventilation has been excellent, 39,550 cubic feet of air per minute being circulated on my last visit. The timbering of the roadways and working-places has been generally found satisfactory. Considerable alterations are proposed, the intention being to work the pumps electrically, so that the compressed air will be available for the coal-cutting machines. A new boiler is being installed. The last two levels, No. 14 and No. 14½, are both in excellent coal, and should the dip continue as at present the outlook is good for an increased output. There are four coal-cutting machines in operation, producing a good percentage of round coal. The machines are solely confined to the solid working. A few pillars are being extracted to the eastward of the main haulage dip.

North Cape Coal-mine, Taupata Estates (A. Forbes, permit).—This property has opened out very well, and is still showing a satisfactory face of hard coal, in thickness about 4 ft. The main heading has advanced about 12 chains. The output for 1911 was 1,700 tons. A staging has been erected on the mud-flat, so that small vessels can load when the tide is in. Good ventilation has been maintained by keeping a parallel heading well up to the main heading, and connecting them by stentons. The timbering in this mine is excellent. The output should considerably increase, as it is intended to put more men on as soon as there are better facilities for shipment.

Marble Creek Coal-mine, Collingwood (James Young, manager).—This property is under development. The seam of coal which is being opened out varies from 3 ft. to 4 ft. in thickness, and dips about 1 in 1½. Drives are set away about 30 ft. apart, and connections made to ensure ventilation. The coal at present is being stacked on the surface, awaiting completion of surface developments, when it will be refilled and sent to market. The coal is of bituminous class, and, as far as developed, is of good hard quality.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The total output from mines in the West Coast Inspection District shows a decrease of 122,339 tons compared with the output for 1910. The principal cause of this decrease was the small demand for coal during the first few months of the year. Three small mines—viz., Merrijigs, Kearns, and Enner Glen—have been closed down the whole of the year, and of the larger mines North Brunner and Paparoa have temporarily ceased operations, the former in August and the latter in October. The North Cape Coal-mine, Puponga, has been added to the productive mines, and should show a substantial increase in the output next year. No. 2 Point Elizabeth State Mine and Marble Creek Coal-mine, both under development, will possibly be winning coal before the close of 1912.

Of the larger mines, Millerton shows an increase of 30,826 tons, and North Brunner 1,862 tons. The following mines show decreases: Point Elizabeth, 23,996 tons; Blackball, 9,684 tons; Paparoa, 15,378 tons; Brunner, 8,284 tons; Denniston, 24,351 tons; Westport-Stockton, 64,715 tons; Seddonville, 2,669 tons; Puponga, 6,975 tons: total, 156,052 tons.

The returns from the smaller mines worked under permit show that about half of them slightly increased their output, whilst the others show a decrease.

Ventilation: At all the collieries under the management of a first-class certificated mine-manager the ventilation of the workings is produced by exhaust fans, which are giving satisfactory results. In the smaller mines circulation of the current of air by natural ventilation is produced by holing to the surface.

ACCIDENTS.

Thirteen accidents were reported, nine of which were fatal and four non-fatal, as follows:—

Fatal.

Point Elizabeth State Mine No. 1.—(3/3/11): T. Whyte, miner, killed by a fall of coal from roof. (3/8/11): T. McGahan, miner, killed by a fall of coal from roof. (2/9/11): G. Fullick, deputy, killed by a fall of stone when drawing timber.