

POINT ELIZABETH COLLIERY.

Coal-winning.

The gross output from the colliery since its inception in June, 1904, amounted to 1,946,585 tons.

The average number of men and boys employed in and about the mine during the year were 233 men and 20 boys, made up of 92 coal-miners, 84 adult underground employees, and 3 boys; and on the surface 57 adults and 17 boys.

The time worked averaged 4·7 days per week.

The miners' average earnings for the days worked were—in No. 1 Section, 17s. 9·74d., and in No. 2 Section, 16s. 6·55d., or a mean average of 17s. 1·83d. per shift.

Underground Development.

With the exception of a small area which is being developed in what is known as the bottom seam in the No. 2 Section of this colliery, the bulk of the output was obtained from pillar-extraction.

During the year much difficulty has been encountered at this colliery through spontaneous combustion. The first fire originated in the dip workings of the No. 2 Section, in consequence of which that section was rendered idle for twenty-nine days before the fire was effectively dealt with. This was done by building stoppings to exclude the air from the fire area. The stoppings required were numerous, owing to the method of working not being suitable for mines liable to spontaneous combustion.

The second fire originated in the old workings of the crosscut dip in the No. 1 Section, which is separated from the main-dip workings by a fault. In this case the section was rendered idle for only five days. The fire was kept in check by pumping water into the vicinity, thus enabling the stoppings to be built for sealing off the fire area.

As the fire in this case originated in the old workings where access was impossible, it was deemed advisable for the safety of other parts of the mine to flood the section and sacrifice the small quantity of coal which remained to be worked in that dip area. The flooding was effective, the water rising much higher than the level of the fire.

Exploratory Work.

In connection with this colliery much exploratory work has to be done in the way of boring different parts of the reserve, and it is to be regretted that such operations have not been very successful. As there is no development-work going on at this colliery and the present workings are rapidly approaching exhaustion, unless some other suitable area is available and capable of being operated by the present plant the approximate life of this colliery may be estimated at two years.

Accidents.

Accidents of a minor character occurred during the year, but there were none of a serious nature.

Plant.

The plant and machinery in and about the colliery have been maintained in good condition. One hour only was lost during the year, due to a breakdown of the screening plant.

General.

In the conduct of the workings of this colliery and the different branches connected therewith it has been the aim of the management to keep down the cost of production and other expenditure to the lowest, consistent with safety and efficiency; but in connection with this colliery there are items of cost which for some time cannot be reduced, whether the mine is kept working full time or otherwise, the principal item being that of pumping. The same power and attention is still required for this work with a daily output of 500 tons as was hitherto required when dealing with a much larger output, consequently the tonnage cost under this head is high.

LIVERPOOL COLLIERY.

The mine worked on 253 days 4 hours, an average of 4·87 days per week. The balance of the possible working-time—viz., 313 days—is accounted for as follows: Pay Saturdays, 22; union holidays, 14; want of shipping, 16 days 4 hours; bar unworkable, 7 days.

The average number of men and boys employed in and about the mine in connection with coal-winning were 181 men and 13 boys, made up as follows: Coal-miners, 87; other adult underground employees, 62; on the surface, 32 adults and 13 boys. In addition to those employed in connection with coal-winning there were employed on property and development work 23 men and 2 boys.

Underground Development.

The principal work under this head during the year was confined to developing the areas in the vicinity of the Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Sections of this colliery, and, with the exception of a moderate area which has been proved in the No. 3 Section, the development of the others have been very unsatisfactory.

In the No. 1 Section, which is situated near the terminus of the upper inclined haulage road, there are employed twenty pairs of miners on one shift only. This section, which was looked upon as the principal one, has, owing to faulting and pinching-out of the seam, not a great future before it. The development of this section was to a large extent dependent upon the area eastward from the present opening. The winning-places, however, in this direction have for some considerable time been stopped, owing to the pinching-out of the seam. Recent exploratory work has proved there is nothing to warrant any further expenditure in that direction. The area remaining to be worked in this section is therefore somewhat limited.