

POINT ELIZABETH COLLIERY.

Coal-winning.

The gross total output for the colliery since its inception in June, 1904, amounted to 2,080,687 tons.

The colliery worked on 237 days 6 hours for the year, making an average of 4·57 per week. The average numbers of men and boys employed in and about the mine were as follow: Underground—82 miners, 76 in other branches, including truckers, shiftmen, deputies, &c., and 3 boys; on the surface there were 46 men and 15 boys: making a total of 204 men and 18 boys.

The total payments made on wages account, exclusive of stores, compensation, timber, and royalty, amounted to £35,705 17s. 11d. The coal-miners' average daily earnings were 18s. 10·03d.

Underground Development.

The bulk of the year's output was obtained from pillar-extraction in both sections of the colliery, the only exception being in the rise workings of the No. 2 section, where a small area of new ground was developed. The latter completes all solid work in connection with this colliery, and the output from now on until the mines are exhausted will be entirely dependent on coal won from standing pillars. In my last annual report reference was made to an area in the No. 2 section of the colliery that had to be sealed off owing to spontaneous combustion. During the year under review all available coal below where the fire originated, and for 3 chains above it, has been extracted, and the water allowed to rise with the object of extinguishing the fire. Upon investigation it was found the fire had spread much higher than the original seat. Arrangements were then made for extracting pillars up the dip for another 4 chains, and when this is completed and the water allowed to rise to that distance investigations will again be made to ascertain whether it will be safe to open up that area. If it is possible to win some of the coal from this area the life of this section would no doubt be prolonged for a few months, but from past experience in dealing with underground fires I am doubtful whether any of the plant and coal can be taken therefrom.

Reference to the accompanying plans will show that the workings of this colliery are fast approaching exhaustion, and, as it is unlikely that further areas will be found available for exploitation from the present mine-openings, the time is not far distant when, from the above cause, it will be necessary to dispense with some of the employees at this colliery; but it is to be hoped that when such steps are taken the Liverpool Colliery will be developed to such an extent that it will be only a matter of transferring them from one colliery to another.

Surface Works and Accidents.

The whole of the plant and machinery in and about the mine has been maintained in efficient working-order. During the year there were several minor accidents, but none of a serious nature.

LIVERPOOL COLLIERY.

Coal-winning.

The colliery worked on 222 days, an average of 4·27 days per week. The balance of the possible working-time—viz., 314 days—is accounted for as follows: Pay Saturdays, 26; union holidays, 15; want of shipping, 33; bar unworkable, 13; slips on the railway, 5 days.

The average numbers of men and boys employed in and about the mine in connection with coal-winning were 219 men and 16 boys, made up as follows: Coal-hewers, 96; other adult underground employees, 82. On the surface, 41 men and 16 boys were employed. In addition to those employed in connection with coal-winning there were employed on property and development-work 16 men and 1 boy, making a total of 235 men and 17 boys for this colliery.

Underground Development.

For a short period during the year coal was produced from four mines—namely, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 3A—but owing to the presence of stone bands and the high inclination of the seam the No. 2 Mine was stopped in June last, as it became a matter of impossibility for the miners to fill the coal in a marketable condition. The No. 3A Mine, which was opened up during the year, is situated midway between the bins and the upper section of the haulage-road. The seam worked is a continuation of the No. 3 Mine, and the coal won therefrom is of excellent quality. The thickness, so far, has not increased as was anticipated, but as the workings advance in a westerly course there is every reason to expect the seam to increase in thickness.

It is not anticipated that the workings in this mine will be in any way extensive; it was developed only with the object of working a block of coal which could not be economically worked from the No. 3 Mine near the bins.

No. 1 Mine, situated near the upper terminus of the main haulage, has been worked continuously during the year. Reference was made in my last annual report to the limited area, also the friability of the coal in this mine; and, although there is no prospect of further development-work in an easterly and westerly course, it is gratifying to report that as the workings are extended in a northerly direction, the quality and hardness of the coal has improved considerably, enabling a much larger percentage of screened coal to be obtained. The chief drawback in connection with this mine is that the width of the block to be worked is limited, thus