

In addition to those employed under the head of coal-winning there were 36 men and 3 boys employed on property and development work, making a total number for this colliery of 287 men and 28 boys.

The total payments made on wages account in connection with coal-winning, including stores, mine-timber, and compensation, amounted to £63,680 15s.

The coal-hewers' average daily earnings (gross) was 21s. 2'69d., and the net return to each man was 19s. 2'17d., a decrease of 2s. 0'21d. per day when compared with the figures of last year.

Underground Development.

The output from this colliery was obtained from three mines—namely, Nos. 1, 3, and 3A. In connection with the former mine there are two seams being worked—namely, the Morgan seam and another termed the upper seam. The whole of the output from these two seams, with the exception of that of two pairs of miners employed on pillar-extraction, was obtained from solid workings. In the upper seam development-work was confined to the driving of winning-places in a northerly course in what are known as the No. 3 bank and crosscut districts. In each of these districts the undeveloped areas are so small that it will be quite safe to estimate that in the course of the next three or four months all driving in solid workings will be completed, and from then onwards the output for the remaining period of the mine will be produced from coal from pillar-extraction.

The Morgan seam has been further developed by extending the winning levels in an easterly and westerly course, the principal operation being confined to the workings on the western side of the haulage-road.

At the present time there are fourteen pairs of miners employed in this seam, but there are sufficient places to employ a larger number if the men were available. The coal produced from this mine is of good quality, but is of rather a friable nature.

No. 3 mine: Development-work in this mine is now confined to an area about an acre in extent, but as the seam is thin, and in places of an unworkable thickness, it may safely be stated that in the course of two or three months' continuous working this work should be completed.

For some time past a large number of miners have been employed extracting pillars in order to maintain a reasonable output, and from reference to the mine-plan accompanying this report it will be seen that all the pillars in the western part of the mine, and also a large number in the central part, have been extracted. A commencement has also been made to extract pillars in the northern part.

In connection with this mine it must be stated that all the pillars cannot be extracted, as a barrier will have to be left to protect the storage-bins. A reasonable output may be expected from this mine for the next twelve months, but after that period it will be considerably reduced.

No. 3A mine: This small mine has been continuously worked throughout the year, finding employment for five pairs of miners. The output was obtained from pillar-extraction in the main dip workings, and also from development-work in a small area on the eastern side of the haulage-road referred to in my previous annual report. This development-work is now almost completed, and it is anticipated that in the course of about twelve months this mine should be exhausted.

Accidents.

There have been a number of minor accidents during the year, and it is regrettable to report that one of the accidents which occurred at the Point Elizabeth Colliery proved fatal; on the latter a special report was written.

Development-work.

The principal work done under this head was confined to the construction of the new haulage-tunnel to intersect the Morgan seam at its lowest point; also the construction of the surface haulage-road from the middle brake to the tunnel-entrance. The construction of the latter necessitated the building of a low trestle-work for 4½ chains, construction of a bridge 2½ chains in length to span the Seven-mile Creek, and also the building of a retaining-wall for 8 chains on the banks of the above-named creek. This latter work is now almost completed, and a temporary haulage is installed for the conveyance of material to and fro from the middle brake to the tunnel-entrance.

The new haulage-tunnel has been driven a distance of 21 chains, but at the present time is stopped, a coal-seam 11 ft. in thickness having been struck.

Although the actual driving of the tunnel is temporarily stopped, the contractor and his men are employed driving on on the seam in a westerly course with a view of making a connection with the surface. To make this connection the seam will have to be driven on for a distance of 3½ chains, and from that point a tunnel constructed, rising 1 in 1, the length of which will be approximately 160 ft.

At the present time it is difficult to ascertain to what extent the seam will live in an easterly and southerly course, but at the present inclination (24° 12') it cannot extend far in a northerly direction, and it is also doubtful whether it would extend any great distance in a westerly course owing to the disturbed nature of the country.

Cable Tram.

In the early stages of this colliery arrangements were being made for the conveyance of workmen from near the Rewanui Railway-station to the upper terminus of the present haulage-road. In connection with this scheme a considerable amount of work had been done, but owing to an unfavourable report written about five years ago on the future prospects of the colliery this work was suspended. Since then, however, the Morgan seam has been discovered, and proved to exist over a large area; therefore arrangements are now being made to install a cable tram for the conveyance of the workmen from what is known as the Gorge tunnel to the middle brake.