

STATE COLLIERIES.

WORKING PORTIONS OF STATE COLLIERIES ON THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE.

As honourable members are no doubt fully aware, an effort was made during the past twelve months to work three portions of the State collieries under co-operative agreements. Two of the sections so worked were isolated from other portions of the State collieries, but the third and remaining section formed a part of the James Colliery. One of the sections was worked under the co-operative system for a period of about six months and the other sections for shorter periods. The results obtained demonstrated clearly that the men obtained material benefits when compared with what they would have gained under the old system, and that such benefits were obtained by the good spirit and fine team-work that prevailed in carrying out mining operations. It was also manifest that under the co-operative principle the relationship established between the men and the Department's officials was of a most cordial nature. One and all concerned did their best to make the new system a success; but, unfortunately, those members of the Miners' Union who were not working on a co-operative system went out on strike as a protest against portions of the mines being worked under such a system, and by pressure from them the members of the co-operative parties were compelled to cancel their contracts with the Department, thus bringing to a termination for the time being an honest and earnest endeavour to better the conditions of the miners employed at the State collieries.

OUTPUT AND SALES.

The operations of the State coal-mines and State coal-depots for the year ended 31st March, 1924, are briefly reviewed hereunder.

Liverpool Colliery.—The gross output for the year was 116,175 tons, as compared with 134,320 tons for last year, a decrease of 18,145 tons.

James Colliery.—The gross output for the year was 28,995 tons, as compared with 25,797 tons for last year, an increase of 3,198 tons.

A comparative statement for the two years is shown hereunder :—

Mine.	Output in Tons, 1924-25.		Output in Tons, 1923-24.	
	Gross.	Net.	Gross.	Net.
Liverpool	116,175	111,487	134,320	129,663
James	28,995	26,445	25,797	24,036

NOTE.—The difference between the gross and the net output is the allowance for mine consumption and waste. In addition to the above 1,291 tons of coal were purchased for resale, of which 195 tons were purchased from co-operative parties on the West Coast.

The disposal, inclusive of stock on hand at the beginning of the year, was as follows: Supplied to—Depots, 36,507 tons; railways, 5,760 tons; other Government Departments, 8,092 tons; shipping, 21,924 tons; gasworks, 63,324 tons; other consumers, 4,317 tons: total, 139,924 tons.

The total sales of State coal from the Liverpool Mine for the year amounted to 112,197 tons, value £168,600, as compared with 129,329 tons, value £204,176, for last year—a decrease of 17,132 tons, with a decrease in value of £35,576.

The average price realized by the mine on the total sales for the year was £1 10s. 0·65d., a decrease of 1s. 6·24d. on last year's average. This decrease is due to sales to Christchurch depot being changed from a c.i.f. Lyttelton basis to f.o.r. Rewanui consequent upon the opening of the Otira Tunnel.

The total sales of State coal from the James Mine for the year amounted to 27,727 tons, value £41,219, giving an average of £1 9s. 8·78d. per ton, a decrease of 2s. 8·59d. on last year's average.

The sales of coal, &c., through the medium of the depots totalled 104,486 tons, value £210,619, as against 119,387 tons, value £246,976 for last year.

The losses at the mines were £3,390, and the profit at the depots, &c., £4,211, making a net profit of £821. £4,552 was applied to the Sinking Fund Account out of the General Reserve. There was keen competition in the sale of coal during the year, owing mainly to large importations of coal by private enterprise from Australia.