

Glen Afton Colliery.—Brinley Kinson, miner, employed at the Glen Afton Colliery on the 4th January, 1926, sustained a fractured ankle. He was engaged filling a skip of coal at the face when it ran off the rails, striking him on the ankle. Kinson was disabled seventy-nine days. On the 12th July, 1926, John Shoddon, miner, received an injury to his right ankle caused by a fall of stone whilst he was engaged setting timber at the face. Sheddson is still [February, 1927] off work.

Hikurangi Colliery.—On the 14th May, 1926, Matti Viscovich, boiler foreman, sustained an injury to his middle finger, right hand. His finger was caught in the driving-chain and sprocket-wheel of the chain-feed-grate. Viscovich was incapacitated ninety-nine days.

WEST COAST INSPECTION DISTRICT (Mr. O. J. DAVIS, Inspector).

During 1926 the coal-output for the combined Nelson, Buller, Reefton, and Grey districts was 1,122,176 tons, made up as follows: Nelson (decrease), 582 tons; Buller (increase), 91,212 tons; Reefton (decrease), 676 tons; and Grey (increase), 80,826 tons. Output of coal for 1925, 951,396 tons; output for 1926, 1,122,176; increase for 1926 over 1925, 170,780 tons.

The total number of men employed during the year 1926 was 2,780, being an increase of 386 over the year 1925.

BULLER DISTRICT.

Denniston Collieries.—*Coalbrookdale Mine.*—Birchall's Section: The coal in the headings which were being driven in a south-westerly direction has thinned to 4 ft. with a stony band 6 in. to 18 in. thick near the roof. Pillar-extraction has commenced at this point. The coal in the panel headings going north-west has thinned to 8 ft., but an increase in thickness is expected farther on. Another panel has been started off the main south heading. The coal is 14 ft. thick.

McIlwain's Section: The two main headings proceeding westerly are in coal 15 ft. thick, of which 8 ft. is being worked.

Waterloo: The panel system is being tried in this section on account of the beneficial results obtained in other sections. Four headings have been set out, two going south-west and two going north-west. 14 ft. of good-quality coal is showing; seven pairs of miners employed. The completion of the drainage-tunnel will enable all pumps to be withdrawn from this section.

Extended dip section: In the bottom seam and to the left of the old dip work is confined to pillar-extraction, two pairs of colliers being employed. Two headings are being developed in the new area on the south-west side of the rope-road: these are being driven 12 ft. wide by 8 ft. high, and the panel system is to be adopted. In the new dip below the fire area, work is confined to the extraction of pillars. The coal is 14 ft. high.

Big Pillar section: Operations here are confined to pillar-extraction; three pairs of men employed. Signs of heating in this section have caused extra care to be taken to prevent fires.

Callaghan's and No. 8 Cascade; Coal from this section confined to pillar extraction.

Ironbridge Mine.—This mine includes the Deep Creek. The bulk of the output has been produced from pillars in the old mine, comprising Kruger's section, Kiwi section, and No. 1 pillar section. In Kruger's section travelling-road a main and tail haulage has been installed to deal with the output from the upper and lower seams. Straight-line pillar-extraction is now in vogue, and good results are being obtained. Most of the output is being obtained from the high pillars. In the Kiwi section the new workings are immediately under the first workings. All places driven 6 ft. to 9 ft. in width. Thickness of coal between workings varies from 6 ft. to 13 ft. Coal very strong, and from 36 ft. to 40 ft. in height. Armoured cables have been installed, and all electric globes enclosed in airtight fittings. New stables, in the shape of loose-boxes, have been built underground.

Millerton Mine.—No extensive development work has been carried out at this mine during the year.

Evans' Daylight section: Output confined to pillar-extraction; four pairs of miners employed. The fire area appears to be under control, but is still active. All attempts to flood this area have so far proved a failure.

Mine Creek north-east section: Pillar-extraction continues in this area under favourable conditions.

Mangatina: Operations in this section are confined to removing top coal in the old bords. It is not intended to remove the pillars owing to creeks on the surface. The coal is about 30 ft. thick. Four pairs of colliers employed.

Third west pillar section: Operations consist of extracting pillars. The coal is about 30 ft. in thickness, and an effort is being made to establish straight-line pillar-extraction. Five pairs of men are employed. The atmosphere in this section is hazy occasionally, due to leaky stoppings from the adjacent fire area.

Third west dip fire area: Owing to leakage in the dams it was found necessary to drain off the water and to strengthen three dams by building additional dams adjacent to those leaking. To all appearances the fire is still active. The stoppings adjacent to the mine-workings are cool, and it would appear that the fire is working to the outcrop.

Second west dip section: Two pairs of colliers engaged cleaning up roads. Arrangements have been made to put in stoppings forming the bottom end of a panel district.

During the month of June a serious fire broke out in the Millerton Mine, and eighteen stoppings had to be erected before it could be got under control. Several wooden stoppings were strengthened by the addition of brick. The following sections have been sealed off: Evans' Pillar section, Evans' Daylight section, Dutton's section, No. 2 dip section, part of No. 1 section. The total area sealed off is about 40 acres. The coal varies from 30 ft. to 40 ft. in thickness. It seems impossible to extinguish the fire on account of so many surface breaks. All that can be done is to try and prevent the fire from spreading to other parts of the mine. Stone-dusting has been commenced, and practically all the roads leading to the fire area have been treated.

Fourth west section: Six pairs of colliers employed on solid work in this section. Roof friable. Dirty stone and shale-bands in the coal near the roof renders the work of keeping the coal clean a very difficult one.

Sixth west section: Six pairs of colliers employed in this section. The outcrop has been reached in several places, and preparations are being made to work a top seam known to exist in this section. Ventilation very good on account of elevation and exposed situation of this section.

Settlement section: Nineteen pairs of colliers employed in this section. Operations consists of solid workings in the bottom seam on the southern side and in solid workings in the upper seam on the northern side. The main heading, going in a westerly direction, is now in about 20 chains from the right-hand branch of Granity Creek in the upper seam.

North-east section: Operations consist of pillar-extraction. Nine pairs of colliers employed.

Second Mangatina section: A small area under a ridge. The solid workings are about finished, and the output will be derived from pillar-extraction.

During the year three prospecting boreholes were put down in the vicinity of Millerton Township, of an aggregate depth of 450 ft. All holes reached the granite, and no coal was found. Approximately £600 was spent on prospecting.

Stockton Mine.—During the year the fluming of coal from the mine to the bins was abandoned and the electric locomotives were again put into operation. A new area of coal at Plover's Creek has been opened out, and development work is being done with a view to working it on the panel system. In the Fly Creek area three parallel headings have been set away on 90 ft. centres. These headings will form a panel of 10 acres. The headings were very wet, and the coal of a very friable nature. The friable nature of the coal-roof necessitates the use of sets. A solid block of coal to the north of the main haulage-road at B layby is being developed on the panel system.

Westportmain Colliery.—This small mine adjoins that of the Westport Company at Millerton. Development is proceeding in a north-easterly direction towards the Millerton Mine. The seam is between 30 ft. and 40 ft. thick. About forty men are employed, the output averaging about 20 tons daily per pair of men employed.