

Power Coal-mine, Ohura.—The mine is situated on Section 1, Block IV, Crown area, Waro Survey District, five miles by road eastward of Ohura Township. A coal-seam 3 ft. 3 in. in thickness has been exposed at the base of a precipitous hill in close proximity to the County Road. The seam is overlain by a mass of hard sandstone, and the gradient of the seam is inclined to the rise of the hill. A pair of prospecting-headings has been driven into the coal-seam in order to prospect the area, which is held by prospecting license. Development consists of the erection of several huts for workmen, affording good accommodation, and the construction of an access bridge across the stream. A caterpillar tractor, together with three caterpillar-fitting wagons, has been purchased for the purpose of conveying the output to Ohura. The tractor is capable of removing 18 to 20 tons of coal from the mine to Ohura in one load at a speed of four miles per hour. It has been demonstrated that the tractor does not damage roads—in fact, it has been proved that its tread is beneficial to unmetalled road-surfaces.

ACCIDENTS.

No fatal accidents occurred in the underground workings of the Northern District mines during the year under review.

On the 21st October, 1927, an unfortunate accident occurred on the railway-siding of the Rotowaro Colliery slack-dump, whereby Alexander Henderson, thirty-nine years of age, was fatally injured by being crushed between two railway-wagons. The deceased was pushing a wagon with four other men on a down grade of 1 in 70, when another wagon, presumably unbraked, moved downward and crushed him between the buffers of the moving wagons.

SERIOUS NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS.

On the 8th March Thomas W. Lees, a miner employed at Waipa Colliery, sustained injuries to his chest and ribs, caused by a fall of roof-coal. Lees is still off work.

On the 14th April a miner, Henry Baldwin, employed at Glen Afton Colliery, received an injury to his left eye, which subsequently became septic and impaired the vision. Baldwin was incapacitated seventy-five days.

On the 27th April William Byers, a miner employed at Waipa Colliery, was injured in an accident, caused by a fall of roof coal and stone. Byers was off work 111 days.

On the 12th May Thomas E. Cooke, a miner employed at Wilson's Colliery, sustained a fractured wrist, caused by a piece of timber falling from a skip. Cooke was incapacitated seventy-four days.

On the 1st July Nicholas Bossad, a trucker employed at Rotowaro Colliery, received serious injury to his right hand whilst engaged in rerailing an overturned skip. Bossad was off work eighty-four days.

On the 28th July William Clare, deputy shot-firer employed at Pukemiro Junction Colliery, sustained a fractured tibia, due to a skip running over the rail-end on to his leg. Clare was off work 140 days.

On the 27th September Harold Astbury, miner, working at Rotowaro Colliery, sustained a fracture of the right collarbone, due to being struck with a piece of timber. Duration of disablement, seventy-four days.

On the 17th November a serious accident occurred at Waipa Collieries Co., Ltd., branch railway, whereby two surfacemen, J. Hill and H. Herbert, sustained fractures of the right and left legs respectively. A trolley on which the injured men were riding collided with a stationary trolley which had preceded them by a few minutes, and both men were thrown over a viaduct by the force of the collision.

On the 24th November Frederick Wilkinson, age sixteen years, sustained a fractured leg whilst working at the boring-machine on the surface at Rotowaro Colliery. Wilkinson is still off work.

PROSECUTIONS.

On the 12th August three miners were convicted and fined £5, £2 10s., and £2 10s. respectively, and costs, for failing to bring out of the mine the explosives remaining in their possession at the end of the shift.

DANGEROUS OCCURRENCES.

(Regulation 82.)

On the 18th June the manager of the Glen Afton Collieries reported indications of heating in the goaf in A pillar section. The heating was subsequently suppressed by the erection of brick stoppings.

On the 6th December the manager of Wilson's Colliery reported a fire at the top of the air-shaft. The fire was subsequently extinguished by water.

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

During 1927 the coal-output for the combined Nelson, Buller, Reefton, and Grey districts was 1,156,191 tons or an increase of 34,015 tons. The output from the Nelson District increased by 2,353 tons; Buller decreased by 9,482 tons; Reefton increased by 197 tons; and Grey increased by 40,947 tons. The total number of men employed during the year was 2,935, being an increase of 155 over the year 1926.

BULLER DISTRICT.

Denniston Colliery.—Coalbrookdale Mine.—In Birchall's section operations consist of pillar-extraction within the panels and splitting up the barrier-pillars at the inbye end to allow of extraction. The coal has thinned to an unworkable thickness. Seven pairs of miners employed here. In McIlwain's section the main headings are still proceeding westerly in good coal. Panel headings are being driven to win places. Seam is over 15 ft. thick, of which the bottom 8 ft. is being worked in development. Thirteen pairs of miners are employed here. In Waterloo section a new haulage-road has been made, with good results from a haulage point of view. The undulating strata has forced the management to use power to haul the coal from the dip folds. The coal is of good quality and of great thickness. About 8 ft. is worked off the floor during development. In the Extended dip section operations consist chiefly of pillar-extraction and the development of a small block of coal on the south-western side of the rope-road. In the Big Pillar section operations consist of pillar-extraction. No trouble has been experienced with the fire during the year. In the No. 8 Cascade operations consist solely of the extraction of pillars. At this mine stone-dusting is being carried on.

Denniston Colliery.—Ironbridge Mine.—This mine includes Deep Creek, which consists of small isolated blocks or areas of coal near the surface of the hill. The bulk of the output is still being produced from the older parts of the mine, comprising Kruger's section, Kiwi section, and No. 1 Pillar section; also from a reopened section known as Young's section. Good results are being obtained from the straight-line pillar method in extraction. Power haulage is being installed here and there to eliminate horse haulage. The mine has been free from fires during the year. Stone-dusting is being carried on.

Millerton Colliery.—No extensive development work has been done during the year. The big fire has been giving the management much concern, and a number of men are employed constantly controlling it by sand-filling cracks, playing water on it, and erecting numerous heavy stoppings to prevent it spreading. Evans Daylight section; Evans section; Nos. 1 and 2 dip sections were lost on account of the big fire. These sections are sealed off from the workable parts of the mine. In the north-east, No. 2 west, 3rd west, and 4th west sections operations consist of extracting pillars and driving through old bords and pillars to reach the inbye end of areas of pillars with a view to their extraction. In the 5th west, 6th west, and 2nd Mangatina