

Coal-cutting machines are employed in bords of the first working, and the pillars are extracted by hand-mining. The fireclay roof above the coal-seam is good, and no difficulties are experienced when drawing pillars.

The average yearly output of 100,000 tons was maintained during the year, and as heading development and formed large pillars remaining from a first working exceeded the tonnage taken from pillars, reserves of coal remaining for future working were therefore substantially increased.

The difficulties experienced in supporting a portion of the highly inclined return airway were overcome by the construction of a deviation around the affected part. The provided ventilation exceeds statutory requirements by fully 70 per cent., and the connection effected between No. 1 and No. 3 south sections should provide easy means for ventilating the sections developing to the south.

The haulage roads have been maintained in good order. Face haulage is rather difficult, due to undulating grades and to the capacity of the mine-skips, which are larger than those in use in other Waikato mines.

Wilton Colliery (Wilton Collieries, Ltd., Owners).—An output of 74,432 tons was won from pillars in No. 2 section, and from bords in Katovich's section. The field occurs at an altitude of 200 ft. above the railway and screens, and geologically it could be compared with the neighbouring abandoned Waipa Colliery, as the seams of coal outcrop on the hillsides along the contour of the hills. The average thickness of the seam is 7 ft. It has a bright appearance, and it contains balls of iron pyrites, which are difficult to separate from the coal. The working-seam has been followed 60 chains to south, where it lifted and narrowed to a width of 5 chains.

Prospecting-operations to the south-west proved another detached coalfield, and as this field could be more advantageously worked by another established mine-system of haulage and ventilation it was decided to withdraw the existing formed pillars, commencing from the farthest end.

The pillars are being extracted under ideal conditions as regards safety, with a high percentage of extraction. Particular attention is paid to the control of the roof-weight and to so arrange that the cantilever weight should be thrown to rest on the gob-ends.

It is pleasing to report that no serious accidents occurred in this mine, and that this comparatively thin seam can be worked as economically and safely as the thick seams in the same district.

Rangitoto Coal-mine (Native Lease, Tahia).—A small output was won by Morgan and party in a seam, 7 ft. thick, followed from an outcrop on the stock road. Local requirements were satisfied by an output of 269 tons for the year.

Relief Coal-mine (Auckland University Council Endowment Lease).—This coal-mine has been operated by relief labour on Auckland University College endowment land. Mining operations consist of the extraction of the roadside pillars remaining on both sides of the rise jig.

Taranaki District.

Old Stockman Coal-mine, Mokau.—A small output was won from this mine, worked by Jones and party. The seam is 4 ft. thick and is overlain by hard sandstone, which affords a safe roof. The output is marketed in Mokau and Waitara.

Paparata Coal-mine (Crown Lease: Taranaki Coal-mining Co., Ltd., sublease to A. Pratt and Party).—A small output was won from a 3 ft. seam and carted to Heao Railway-station. Mining operations were discontinued at the end of the year, and the mine was abandoned in working-order by the party.

Egmont Tatu Colliery (Crown Lease: Egmont Collieries Ltd., Owners).—A daily output of 100 tons was maintained by forty miners to the end of June, when a creeping movement of the hillside immediately above the mine-entrance caused operations to be suspended until such time as a thorough examination could be made of the fractures occurring in the hill. Some of the breaks in the overburden were of ancient origin, others were probably caused by forming the pillars too small in the first working. However, as danger to the miners could be apprehended from the downward movement of approximately 10,000 cubic yards of fractured sandstone, the manager agreed to withdraw the miners and abandon the mine section, which was being developed in a clean seam of coal 7 ft. to 8 ft. thick under a strong sandstone roof.

Subsequently some of the miners were re-engaged to open up another section lying more conveniently to the terminus of the aerial ropeway of three miles and three-quarters under course of construction from Mangaparo Railway-station. With the assistance of the remaining workmen it was anticipated that the installation would be completed early in the New Year in provision of normal mining-conditions.

Gilbert's Colliery (Crown Lease, Tatu).—The lease was determined, due to the failure of the party to comply with its conditions.

Mangapechi Coal-mine (Crown Lease: Mangapechi Coal-mining Co., Ltd., Owners).—Three headings have been advanced approximately 20 chains, at a dip of 1 in 3, toward the company's freehold. A fault was encountered in the main dip heading, and its displacement has not yet been ascertained, but it would appear that some stone work will be required in the 18 chains from the face to the freehold boundary. The installed steam-plant is inadequate, and other means of power will be required for a continuance of the headings.

A daily output of 30 tons has been maintained from the three headings and the crosscuts set away at intervals between the headings.

The seam is 12 ft. to 15 ft. thick. The coal is of good quality, and it is transported to the main railway over a portion of Ellis and Burnand's private timber railway connecting to Mangapechi Railway-station.

SERIOUS NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS.

On 24th January S. Dunn, fireman-deputy of the MacDonald Mine, sustained a fracture of the left arm, due to being struck by falling stone whilst he was engaged in drawing rails from an abandoned working-face.

On 29th July E. Johnson, miner employed in the Pukemiro Mine, sustained injuries to his neck caused by falling coal from a face disturbed by the effects of a shot.

On 7th August J. Connaw, employed in the Wilton Mine, was injured whilst engaged in unclipping skips from the auxiliary endless rope. He suffered a bruised kidney, and resumed work at the end of the year.

On 10th September John Bogie, miner of the Rotowaro Colliery, sustained a fracture of the spinal column as a result of a piece of coal falling from a high working-place.

On 13th October S. Hambleton, miner of the MacDonald Colliery, was struck by a falling prop and received severe injuries to his head.

DAINGEROUS OCCURRENCES (Regulation 82 of the Coal-mines Act, 1925).

On 25th February, in the Rotowaro No. 1 Colliery, smoke was found issuing from the goaf in the "Machine Dip" section, east side. Brick stoppings were erected, and the area was sealed off.

On 17th March a slight heating, due to spontaneous combustion, was discovered on the edge of the goaf in B3 right pillar section, MacDonald Colliery. Stoppings were subsequently erected, and the heating suppressed.

On 21st October inflammable gas was ignited in McCallum's and Dingwall's place, Renown Mine. Safety-lamps were subsequently introduced into the affected section.

PROSECUTIONS.

A miner was charged with failing to systematically and adequately support the roof of his working-place as required by the timbering regulations posted and specified for that mine. He was convicted and fined £1 and Court costs.