

*Strongman State Mine, Nine-mile.*—During the year a commencement was made to construct the stone tunnel over the depression in the James Mine main haulage road, which is to be used, in conjunction with the last-named haulage road, to form the haulage road to the Strongman Mine. This tunnel is being driven from both ends, and a total distance of 21.4 chains has been completed, leaving 7.5 chains to complete. It is estimated that this will be completed by the end of March, 1939. The construction of Nos. 3 and 3A tunnels which form a continuation of the James Mine haulage road between Cannel Creek and surface haulage road, coursing along the Nine-mile Creek, has been completed. No. 5 Tunnel, being constructed to tap the coal-seam, has been driven a total distance of 29.9 chains, leaving approximately 2.5 chains to be driven to complete the work, while in the return airway there remains approximately 1.5 chains to be driven. A commencement has also been made to construct a shaft for the purpose of connecting the return airway with the surface. Much work has been done during the year in the laying of 90 lb. to the yard rails on the main haulage road, but a distance of 54 chains is yet to be completed. The rails referred to are making a first-class tram-line on the haulage road. A most modern concrete bathhouse and change-room is in course of construction and almost completed. A commencement has been made in the erection of a new all-steel storage bin and all-steel housing for a modern screening-plant to be used in connection with Strongman Mine and to replace the old wood structure now in use at the James Mine.

*Blackball Coal-mines Proprietary, Ltd., Blackball.*—The whole output from this mine during the year was won by extracting pillars to the rise of the main level from No. 7 bank and outbye to No. 2 bank. On the 6th December indications of a creep occurred, and heating was taking place in No. 1½ bank at a point approximately 50 yards to the rise of the main level; consequently, operations ceased in the mine. The plant was removed and stoppings erected to seal off the heated area. On the 1st April last a commencement was made to construct two stone tunnels, from the surface south-west of Ford Creek adjacent to the storage bins, for the purpose of tapping the dip coal left behind in the old mine to the dip of No. 2 dip workings. These two tunnels have each been driven approximately 600 ft. After driving approximately 520 ft. a considerable quantity of water was encountered, seriously retarding progress. At the end of the year the return tunnel was 120 ft. from the coal and the main tunnel 240 ft. from the coal. New coal-cutting and conveying machinery is to hand ready for installation in this mine, but, owing to the slow progress in driving the tunnels, it is difficult to state when they will be installed.

*Blackball Creek Coal Co., Ltd., Blackball.*—This mine is operated on the Blackball Coal-mines Proprietary's property. Operations are confined to the extraction of small pillars of top-seam coal from Nos. 3 and 4 sections. No. 2 section was abandoned during the year. The sections are situated in the old rise workings of the Blackball mine; consequently, no development work can be done.

*Briandale Collieries, Ltd., Ten-mile.*—The whole output from this mine was won from development work. Early in the year the rise heading, driven immediately inbye of the stone-drive, encountered a fault which seriously interfered with development work. To surmount this difficulty another stone-drive 1½ chains in length was constructed from the surface to tap the seam on the upthrow side of the fault. Two levels in coal have been driven from the inbye end of the stone tunnel a distance of 5 chains in a north-easterly direction. The coal-seam is 5 ft. in thickness.

*Wallsend Colliery (Brunner Collieries, Ltd.), Brunner.*—The output from this mine was won from development work in the Rope-road Extension section and the Slant Dip section and the splitting of pillars in Nos. 1, 2, and 3 rise panels. All pillars in Nos. 2 and 3 panels have been sufficiently split, and preparations are being made to seal off both panels. In the north-east corner of No. 1 panel a little solid work has been done adjacent to the fault which has cut off further development to the rise of Nos. 1, 2, and 3 panels, while an air-course has been constructed across the top of the panel. This air-course has been constructed for the purpose of ensuring a constant supply of air to the north-east corner of the panel, where sudden outbursts of gas have occurred on three occasions, causing the withdrawal of all workmen.

*Development Work in Rope-road Extension Section:* The main headings in this section coursing in a south-westerly direction have now been driven 34 chains in good-quality coal of from 8 ft. to 12 ft. in thickness. The first panel to the rise of these headings has been further developed, and preparations are now being made to open the second panel. In addition to the development to the rise of the main headings, a commencement has been made to drive two slant dips at a point 22 chains inbye. A compressed-air-operated "Korfman" coal-cutting machine has been installed, and it is intended to use this to expedite development work both in the Rope-road Extension headings and the two slant dips.

*Development Work in Slant Dip Section:* No development work has been done regarding the extension of the slant dip, but development work has continued in a westerly and an easterly direction off the main slant dip, while a panel has been opened on the east side.

The coal in all sections of the mine is of good quality.

*Dobson Colliery (Grey Valley Collieries, Ltd.), Dobson.*—The whole of the output obtained during the year was from development work in the dip workings.

*No. 2 West Section:* Early in the year all development work, up to the fault which was encountered in the main level, was completed and operations therein ceased.

*No. 3 West Section:* All work in this section was confined to the opening-up of panels to the dip of the main level, all work to the rise of the level having been completed. No. 1 panel is almost completely formed into pillars, and No. 2 panel is now being formed. The coal is of good quality and the average thickness is 12 ft. For the purpose of providing better haulage facilities a haulage road is being constructed from No. 1 dip to the foot of the dip in this section on which an endless rope haulage system will be installed. All coal in this section will then be worked to the rise of this level.

*No. 4 West Section:* Development work in this section has proceeded at a very reasonable rate. The main level has been driven a total distance of 17 chains in good-quality coal, the average thickness of the seam being 12 ft. One panel to the rise of the main level and two panels to the dip are being developed. The total distance developed to the dip of No. 4 level is 14 chains. To facilitate haulage from this section a compressed air-haulage engine has been installed to operate an endless rope haulage system.

*No. 4 East Section:* During the year very little work has been done in No. 4 east level and the rise workings off same, due to the presence of a number of "feeders" of gas. Consequently, development work has been confined to the dip of the main level. A slant dip has been driven a distance of 7 chains, and when this is farther advanced it is intended to develop panels of work off this dip. The installation of an 8 in. diameter pipe-line for transmission of compressed air has greatly improved the working of compressed-air-driven machines in the extreme inbye end of the workings.

*Paparoa Colliery (Paparoa Coal Co., Ltd.), Roa.*—This company operated in two seams during the year—viz., No. 1 seam in the aerial section and No. 2 seam in the west level section.

*Aerial Section:* The new dip heading in this section driven on the north side of the fault encountered in the old dip, has been driven a distance of 15 chains in good-quality coal approximately 15 ft. in thickness. A panel of work has been developed, and at the end of the year eight pairs of miners were employed therein. Should this dip be extended a further 10 chains a connection will be made with previous workings in No. 1 seam, which workings were operated from the main haulage tunnel. It may then be possible to handle the coal from the aerial section by means of the main endless rope system in lieu of by the aerial ropeway at present in use.

*West Level Section:* The largest proportion of coal obtained from this section was won from pillar-extraction. There is yet a little solid work to complete, and it is anticipated that this will be completed during 1939. During 1937 a drive, partly in stone and partly in coal, was driven a distance of 3 chains for the purpose of tapping the coal to the dip of the main west level, and although the drive tapped the seam, no further work was done during the year under review.