

were fatally injured in their working-faces. Blame was not attachable to any person in either of the accidents; also a miner named James Hodgson dropped down dead in his working-face, due to syncope, arising from disease of the heart. Reports kept to date. Air-measurement, 16,500 cubic feet per minute.

Brunner Mines (owners, Greymouth-Point Elizabeth Coal Company).—The output from these mines was well maintained, amounting to 120,403 tons, being a creditable and substantial increase of 23,892 tons over the preceding year.

Brunner Dip Mine.—(11/12/1900): During the year pillar-extraction was practically confined to exhaust the dip working, without risk of loss from heavy inflows of surface-water through the broken strata. Prior to a former visit the pump bed-plate had broken, which necessitated withdrawal. Fortunately weather conditions were favourable, hence surface-water was comparatively light, and, the ground behind the engine-road pillars having been exhausted, haulage facilities enabled the miners to remove and fill the coal away without loss in advance of the rising water. Connected with the present working, but to the rise of main level, a few large pillars are yet to be removed between Nos. 1 and 3 inclines; also, outside the "Big fault," and in conjunction with the Ladysmith rise district of old pillar-working, a section of valuable coal exists, which the management proposes to exhaust conjointly with the inside section, and thus maintain the present output. To win the coal outside the fault a rise heading will be driven from the adit engine-plane about 15 chains in from daylight. Gas in small quantities is occasionally reported in the morning examination. Lead-locked safety-lamps are exclusively used. Reports are kept to date, and the provisions of the Act are strictly enforced. No serious accidents are reported. Air-measurement, 16,000 cubic feet per minute.

Ladysmith Mine.—(11/12/1900): This mine forms the central portion of the Brunner lease, and opens out the most extensive area of unexhausted workings in the coalfield. Unfortunately, little is known of its geography. However, developments having for their object the total extraction of the pillars, and the conveyance of the coal over a series of securely timbered self-acting inclines, are carried out in a substantial and practical manner. The coal is of hard, bright quality, with strong grit sandstone roof. Ventilation is very good, and so far gases have not been met with. Reports kept to date; no accidents reported; naked lights in use.

Brunner Rise Mine.—(12/12/1900): This mine forms the extreme rise section of the Brunner lease. The natural conditions of coal and roof are variable, with steep gradients on soft fireclay floor, and cannot be considered favourable for removal of pillars. All things considered, total exhaustion has been most successful. The output is maintained from an adjoining dip section, tapped by a dip rock-tunnel, through which the coal is hauled by a standing-engine at dip-top. The natural air-current is now more constant and reliable since direct communication was permanently opened with the Ladysmith district. Reports are kept to date. No serious accidents are reported.

ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES.

Millerton Mine (5/1/1900).—A machine-driver named John Robinson was slightly injured on the head by a fall of coal coming over the sprag.

Coalbrookdale Mine (13/2/1900).—A deputy named Richard Holmes was injured on the lower part of the bowels by a runaway truck. Injuries not serious.

Blackball Mine (29/3/1900).—A miner named Harry Slade was fatally injured by a fall of coal in the face. No blame attached to any person.

Ironbridge Mine (8/8/1900).—A machine-lad named John Hart was injured on head and face by a fall of coal coming over the sprag while holing. Injuries not serious.

Blackball Mine (14/8/1900).—A miner named Roger Stephenson was fatally injured by a jig-prop getting loose at the foot and striking him on the head. No blame attached to any person.

Blackball Mine (15/9/1900).—A miner named James Hodgson dropped dead in his working-face from syncope, arising from disease of the heart.

Blackball Mine (30/11/1900).—A furnaceman named George H. Green was suffocated by resultant gases generated by spontaneous ignition.

GENERAL REMARKS.

According to statistical returns, the gross tonnage raised throughout the district was 589,183 tons, which, compared with the preceding year, is an increase of 67,236 tons, notwithstanding that the Westport-Cardiff Mine, which ceased operations in September, 1899, contributed 34,927 tons to the output for that year. The deficiency due to the stoppage of the Cardiff Mine has been more than made up by the increased output from the Westport Coal Company's collieries, which have not only maintained the output, but produced a surplus of 6,628 tons, which, added to the output of 10,092 tons from the Mokihinui Mine, gives a total increase of 16,720 tons from the locality of Westport alone.

From the Greymouth district the Brunner Mine raised 120,403 tons and the Blackball 82,516 tons, being an increase of 23,895 tons and 24,380 tons respectively.

Reviewing the producing-capacities of the various mines for the ensuing year, I fully anticipate a further increase.

Accidents in the Westport Coal Company's collieries are marked by a creditable decrease, while the Denniston Coal-miners' Accident Relief Fund shows a satisfactory increase, which facts can only be attributed to the safe and more effective system of coal-getting by mechanical appliances, together with the efficient supervision in connection therewith by the company's officers in timbering and spragging the working-faces.

I regret to record the occurrence of three fatal accidents and one death from syncope in the Blackball Company's mine. Two of these accidents and the death happened in the working-face,