

## SOUTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT (MR. GEORGE DUGGAN, Inspector).

*Coal-output.*

The output of coal for the year—491,196 tons—is an increase of 36,126 tons over that of 1924.

The Canterbury output again decreased by 2,999 tons, and that of Central Otago by 857 tons. The output from the Southland mines shows the substantial increase of 38,637 tons, chiefly from the Ohai field. South Otago returns show the small increase of 462 tons, and those of North Otago of 883 tons.

Owing to a strike the Ohai Coal Company's mine was idle from the 2nd April to the 14th May. Apart from this strike the year was marked by the comparative freedom from labour troubles.

A considerable proportion of the output from the Ohai field consists of slack coal, for which there is only a very small and gradually diminishing market; consequently most of the slack has to be thrown away as waste. The efforts of all concerned must be directed to reduce the proportion of slack made, and also to find some practicable way of utilizing the remainder of the small coal.

*Mount Torlesse Mine.*—The safety-lamp section was exhausted in June. A new dip drive was commenced from an outcrop about 5 chains to the westward. At the outcrop two seams were showing, the upper being 3 ft. and the lower 2½ ft. thick, with about 10 ft. of shale and sandstone between. The dip was stopped when 55 yards down, as the coal, which was always steeply inclined, became vertical and thinned down to 12 in. A crosscut was driven south-west off the dip at a grade of 1 in 3, and proved coal 3½ ft. thick, but soft and friable. On the east side a place was driven in stone and at about 50 yards intersected a seam which outcrops in Woods Creek. The main dip will shortly be extended to cut this seam.

*Homebush Mine.*—This mine is now under the charge of a certificated deputy. The low-seam workings were exhausted early in the year. A dip was recently put down in the "engine" seam in an unworked area of approximately 5 acres, and six miners are now employed there. This area is beyond the large fault met in 1906 when the mine was previously worked. The coal is 7 ft. in thickness, and dips at a grade of 1 in 3. The dip is down over 3 chains, and three levels are being driven on the north side. One level was also started on the south side, but was stopped when it was only a few yards in, as faulted coal was met.

*Bush Gully Mine.*—A 3 ft. seam is now being worked considerably below the 5 ft. one formerly worked by McQueen and party. The 3 ft. seam was at first divided by a band of stone 8 in. to 12 in. thick. This band has now disappeared, and the coal is fairly clean. A return airway was driven to an outcrop at a higher altitude. The party anticipates working an area 15 chains long and about 2 chains wide.

*St. Helens Mine.*—A short steep dip was driven early in the year. Two seams were worked from it, the upper being 5 ft. thick and the lower 3 ft., with 7 ft. of stone between. A fire broke out during December, and the dip had to be sealed. Another dip was commenced shortly before the holiday season.

*Steventon Mine.*—Early in October work ceased, as the pillar-work was completed. A "creep" developed near the bottom of the crosscut, and the pillars immediately to the rise of the bottom level were crushed and lost. No attempt was made to prove the extent of the fault which had been met in the main dip. About 10 chains north of the mine-mouth a prospect drive was put down at a grade of about 1 in 3 for 56 yards. After driving through shingle for 30 yards the coal, which was split up by a stone band 18 in. thick, was met. The top and bottom coals were 18 in. thick, and being unsaleable the drive was stopped. Two men are now working on an area recently applied for under a coal-prospecting license and which adjoins the Whitecliffs Mine.

*Clearview Mine.*—A large fault has been met at the face of the main level, which is now in 68 chains. An incline 3 chains outbye has also met this fault, which is running due north and south. The throw of the fault has not yet been proven. Eight chains beyond this fault is a large break in the hill, so the outlook is not very promising.

*Tripp's Mine.*—Floods in June carried away most of the surface jig, and much additional filling had to be done to repair it. The pillar-work in the old mine will soon be completed. A new drive has been commenced south of the old mine and further down the hill. This is virgin ground, and they expect to meet coal within a few yards.

*Burnwell Mine.*—Very little work was done at this mine during the year. The coal, being soft, is almost unsaleable.

*Albury Mine.*—The new owner has worked strenuously in an endeavour to prevent the mine-fire from endangering the McKenzie traffic-road. A wide trench was cut to the floor of the seam 44 yards long and running east and west. From the eastern end the trench was continued south for over a chain. A cross-trench, a chain long, had to be cut to enable work to be continued at the present face, where the coal is dipping to the south at a grade of 1 in 5. The progress of the fire has been checked to the north, and the south trench is checking it there also. The coal at the east end is 25 ft. thick, with only two stone bands, the upper 15 in. thick and the lower from 6 in. to 9 in. The former workings were above the lower stone band, so about 7 ft. of bottom coal was left unworked.

*Woodbank Mine.*—A short drive was put in early in the year for about 10 ft. The coal is there about 7 ft. in thickness, but of poor quality. No further work has since been done.

*Allanholme Mine.*—On the east side a small fault was met a few years ago. This fault has now been crossed and good coal met beyond it. If this continues the management intends to put down a new dip incline from the surface and, by leaving a barrier pillar, to cut off all the old work. No work is being done on the west side. Pumping is done by a petrol-engine on the surface.

*Wharekuri Mine.*—The low-level drive was continued, and when 9 chains had been driven workable coal was struck. There was a distance of about 25 ft. between this level and the old workings above. The party anticipated working about 12 chains of coal, but during July a fire broke through from the old workings, and the mine had to be sealed and abandoned.

*Bellemore Mine.*—A level was driven about 15 ft. above the creek. When about 2 chains in they found they were immediately over old workings driven many years ago, and of which no record is known. There was about 3 ft. of water in these old workings, and the entrance was covered by slips from the hillside. At the face of the recent workings the coal, which at the entrance was 20 ft. thick, had pinched down to a few inches, and work in consequence was stopped. Prospecting has since been commenced further down the creek.

*Prince Alfred Mine.*—No attempt was made to again work the dip pillars. Pillaring is proceeding above the area affected by the "creep," and the waste is closing well behind them, thus checking the heating down the dip.

*St. Andrew's Mine.*—This mine has recently been reopened by a party of miners from Bush Gully. They drove a level to the west to work a small area on the rise side of old workings. The level is in about 3 chains, as is also a place going north. The latter met dirty coal. The places going south are in fair coal, but there is a 12 in. band of stone about 4 ft. from the roof. A short bore was put down into the floor in the west level, and, after drilling through 6 in. of stone, went into coal at least 4 ft. thick. The places are being driven about 6 ft. wide.

*Ngapara Mine.*—Development still continues to the north. The coal is regularly hoked by hand, and one of the ribs sheared, and, the seam being thick and fairly level, machine cutting and holing should be advantageous. As electricity for power will be available there within a year the owner may install electric coal-cutters.

*Shag Point Mine.*—Owing to the heavy rains during July and August the main levels and the lower workings were flooded for some time. Later, development was resumed in the main south level, which when about 4 chains in met with a large fault running almost due east and west. The throw of this fault has not yet been proven.

*Shag Point Coal-mining Company's Mine.*—Early in the year most of the working-places were in low coal (3 ft. to 4 ft. thick), and only a couple of places—those nearest the upper level—were over 5 ft. in height. A new haulage-road, 500 ft. in length and dipping at a grade of 1 in 4, was driven from Hailstone Gully to connect with the most advanced workings. This drive is 6 ft. high and 7 ft. wide. Owing to mining having become unprofitable, chiefly due to abnormal haulage and hewing costs, operations ceased on the 9th October, and were not recommenced until the 21st December. During this period a reconstruction of the surface works and railway-siding was made, and the screening plant re-erected on a more convenient site half a mile closer to the Shag Point Railway-station. The new haulage-road has also made possible considerable improvement in the ventilation system of the mine.

*Gimmerburn Pit.*—An opencast pit for local supplies.

*Rough Ridge Pit.*—There was no output during the year from this pit.