

of Nelson, Marlborough, Motueka, and West Coast. The matches have the keenness of an Otago-Southland encounter—fierce challenges are as fiercely met—and feeling sometimes runs very high. Local pride is very strongly developed in this respect. The miners furnish the backbone of a light but phenomenally tough forward-pack. Perhaps it is the life that makes them that way. In winter the miner leaves home before sunrise and returns after dark. He does not see the sun, his work is heavy, is carried on in an impure atmosphere, and is not devoid of danger—yet he would not change it! Once underground no other worker is as independent as he. And there is, too, his fierce pride in his calling. He merits admiration and pity—but he does not pity himself.

Westport is rich in "characters"; people who, by their originality or eccentricity, have acquired a sort of license. There is Fred, who, in his cups, will propound and solve intricate mathematical problems, trumpeting the while that "unless we can reduce it to maths, we know nothing about it"; and Charlie, who tells Irish fairy tales. The tales are good, even if the fairies are not, and the possibility of their reduction to maths is remote. And then there is Danny, whose passion is the early history of the district, passed on in richly humorous terms.

Westport's soil is underlain by a hard pan of iron conglomerate. Thus Westport is surrounded by worthless, sour, marshy "pakihi" lands rather like the Russian "podsol." Extensive (and expensive) research has gone forward under the direction of the Cawthron Institute, but the results have not been wholly satisfactory. There seems little possibility of the economic development of, say, dairying in the immediate neighbourhood of Westport. What little timber that is readily available is being rapidly cut out. So the theme returns to coal.

The best bituminous coal in New Zealand, some of the best steam coal in the world, lies along the Paparoa Range. Geologists say that this coalfield was originally laid down as a flat sheet, much as it still is at Charleston. Earth movements, as shown by the great Kongahu fault, raised the land and subjected the coal to tremendous pressure during the upthrust. Thus its quality was greatly improved. The seams occur on the top of the ridge, at Denniston (2,000 ft.), Millerton, and even on the top of Mount William. All these places rise cliff-like from the coastal plain and the coal is lowered by ropeways down an incline of breath-taking steepness.

At the bins, the tubs having been emptied into enormous containers, the coal is screened (sifted) and the "screened coal" and "slack" loaded separately into the hoppers, which carry it away. These hoppers resemble inverted pyramids with trap-doors for the discharge of the coal. They are fitted into a four-wheeled frame called a "bogie." Loading consists of backing the hoppers under the bins and thus filling them by gravity with about 8 tons of coal apiece.

Some goes by rail to Christchurch, but most of the coal passes over the Westport



From the Cascade Mine the coal is "flumed" by water-power down a long trough for seven miles.