

FOUNTAIN COUNTY.

No. 2 Mine of the Indiana Bituminous Coal Company is the only one in this county employing sufficient men to come within the provisions of the mining law of the State. It is located about one and one-half miles northwest of Silverwood, on a branch switch from the Clover Leaf railroad. The mine ran well during the whole year, the coal being of good quality. It lies very irregularly both as to thickness and level, which makes it inconvenient to work, being difficult to drain, and making heavy hauling for mules. Some heavy cuts have been made to level hauling roads in the mine and some of the under clay was sold for manufacturing purposes. I was informed that it was in demand for making buff building brick, and gave good results. This stratum of clay is about eight feet thick. There is a good roof overlying the coal and the mine is very well ventilated. An escape shaft has been provided during the year, and was in good condition at the time of my last inspection.

The Shipman mine has not been operated during the year and the Sturm mine has been worked out and abandoned.

GIBSON COUNTY.

Has but one mine employing more than ten men—the **Oswalt mine**, at the crossing of the E. & T. H. and Air Line railroads, one mile north of Princeton. I noted in my last annual report the completion of the shaft at this mine and hoped for a speedy development of the vein. In this I was disappointed, as it was not until about the 1st of August that they began making reports to me. On August 25th I was notified that a fatal explosion had occurred in the mine, and on investigation I found that the main entries were driven only about 250 feet on each side of the shaft, and cross entries were just being turned. An air shaft was under construction. I called attention to some provisions of the statute which were not being complied with and found on my next visit that they had been followed, with the exception that instead of a speaking tube from the top to the bottom of the shaft a telephone was being used. On a later visit by Mr. Epperson it was found that some of the working places were generating fire damp and the proper attention was not being given to keeping parallel entries equally advanced, thereby allowing the air to return before reaching the working faces. This was remedied when I visited the mine two weeks later. I learned on this occasion that it was the practice of miners to burn the gas out of their places, and called the attention of the superintendent to the danger of

the practice. He seemed to think, however, that there was no danger in firing a small amount of the gas. I found a sufficient amount of air circulating to carry out and dilute all explosive gases that could be given off by the coal or other strata, though there was only a small fan at the bottom of the shaft. A larger fan was being placed on the surface at that time and the superintendent reported to me after it was put in operation that a largely increased volume of air was in circulation. While talking of the time when the air shaft would likely be completed I made a calculation of the area excavated at that time and found it to be about 2,000 square yards. The air shaft was then being pushed as rapidly as possible and I thought would be down to the coal before 5,000 square yards had been excavated. In these circumstances I had no power to curtail the working force of the mine nor to enforce any safety rules I might recommend. In another part of this report I give a copy of evidence taken by the coroner in investigating an explosion here.

GREENE COUNTY.

ISLAND VALLEY MINE.

Located two miles southeast of Linton, on the I. & V. R. R. The coal is five feet thick and of excellent quality for steam and domestic purposes. Operated by a shaft fifty-two feet deep. The output at this place is about 300 tons daily. When last inspected several changes were ordered to put the ventilation in good condition. Sixty men are employed at this mine.

ISLAND No. 1 MINE.

Owned by Island Coal Company. Located one and one half miles south of Linton. Operated by a shaft sixty-six feet deep. This is a machine mine. They are working eleven Harrison machines, and they also have the latest improved machinery for hauling and screening the coal. The coal is five feet thick and of good quality. At last inspection the mine was in good condition.

ISLAND No. 2 MINE.

Located at Linton. Owned by Island Coal Company. Operated by a shaft ninety-five feet deep. This is a machine mine, one of the largest in the State. They work twenty-two Harrison machines. The capacity of this place is 1,200 tons daily. The coal is five feet thick and of excellent quality. They have a rope haulage at this place. At last inspection the mine was in good condition.