

REPORT ON THE OPERATIONS OF  
THE MEUNNA COAL MINING SYNDICATE

Introduction

Along the east bank of Flowerdale River three of the five Preolenna Coal seams have been exposed in cuts and mine openings by the Meunna Coal Mining Syndicate. These seams are 18 to 24 inches thick and extend unbroken over half-a-mile from the main opening in a southerly direction.

The coal may be regarded as of similar quality to that on the adjacent Preolenna property, and of equal thickness.

The chief obstacles to the successful operation of the mines on these seams have been:-

1. The comparative thinness of the seams;
2. The limited market for the coal;
3. Insufficient capital of the Companies.

The way by which these obstacles can be surmounted is shown in the following statement.

DEVELOPMENT

Since its organisation the operations of the Syndicate have been exploratory rather than developmental. The only permanent work is a dip-adit driven in an easterly direction a distance of 120 feet. When funds have been made available it will be advanced to 500 feet, and inclined headings will be driven from that point north and south. These and other necessary mining works will involve an expenditure of £2,400.

It is generally agreed that the first preliminary to successful operation on a large scale is the thorough drilling of the mining area. Here it is not proposed to confine operations to one main opening but to open as many small mines as the economic conditions will permit. This will, in a degree, obviate the necessity for drilling to determine the amount and direction of dip, and the positions and magnitude of faults.

The site of the present main opening is a suitable one.

METHOD OF MINING

The proposed lay-out of the mining works, as drawn by the Manager (Mr. Hugh Barr) is considered to be sound and well advised. The next question in point of interest is: What is the best method to adopt in the mining of coal? Developmental work can be carried on by hand unaided in the most satisfactory manner, but the ordinary hewing methods cannot be employed with advantage on seams so thin. It is considered advisable, therefore, to use drilling and cutting machines in the operation of breaking the coal. In addition to the high cost of hewing by hand, consideration should be given to the fact that mining by machines is much more convenient in use and the work is less arduous.

It is advised, therefore, that machines be used in breaking the coal.

COST OF MINING

Mining by hand cannot be performed at a lower rate than 18/- per ton; mining by machines can be performed at 8/- to 10/- per ton. From the foregoing statement the necessity for the employment of machines becomes obvious.

COST OF TRANSPORT

The cost of haulage from the pit-mouth to the railway (three quarters of a mile) along a wooden rail tramway by horse is estimated at 3/6 per ton. Railway transport is at the rate of 1d. per ton per mile.

COST OF DELIVERY

TO THE CEMENT WORKS AT RAILTON

Cost of haulage .....	£. s. d.	per ton
	3	6
Railway freight-3/4 miles at 1d per ton per mile .....	7	0
	<hr/>	
Cost of transport	10	6
Cost of development and mining by hand	18	0
	<hr/>	
Cost of delivery at Railton	£1	8 6
	<hr/>	

PREPARATION OF THE COAL FOR MARKET

The reason for the limited market for this high-grade coal is its rather high proportion of sulphur. This impurity is not detrimental to its use as a fuel in the manufacture of Portland Cement, nor is the iron with which the sulphur is in combination, as pyrite and marcasite, of any serious disadvantage. The ash content is low and its composition is such that it will not seriously affect the quality of the cement. All the coal broken including slack is marketable at the one rate. If it is desired to remove portion of the clay and pyrite impurities, this can be effected at a low cost by the use of washing machines.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

At present the only market for large quantities of this class of coal is at Railton. If the Companies can deliver coal at Railton at a figure 10% below that of the average grade of New South Wales black coal, and can guarantee regular and large deliveries, a permanent industry could be established at Preolenna. It is essential in order to ensure success, to use machinery in the mining of the coal and to provide the cheapest means of haulage to the railway. As machines are necessary, provision should be made for their use when developmental work has been advanced to allow of production on a commercial scale. The sum of £3,500 would prove sufficient to enable the Syndicate to reach the production stage but it is considered that more capital should be raised to provide for all the labour-saving machinery required in furnishing a well equipped mine.

(Signed) A. McINTOSH REID  
GOVERNMENT GEOLOGIST

Latrobe. 18th October, 1925.