

required to pay for gross weight, are desirous of obtaining a larger per cent of salable coal. Another advantage, and one which I consider especially beneficial to the miner, is the fact that the quantity of powder required is not so great as when shooting off the solid. Owing to the quantity of powder required for solid shooting, it brings about conditions that make it dangerous, not only to the persons using it, but to others who may be in close proximity to them. Explosions from the use of powder have been frequent in the past, and has caused much litigation owing to accidents caused thereby. I am glad to be able to say that there has not been an accident from that source during the last year.

*Improvements.*—There has been a general overhauling of the mining plants throughout the district, during the year, in retimbering main and escapement shafts, and in some cases rebuilding the entire top works, and in putting in shaker screens, also additional boiler power. Mention is made of a few of the more important and extensive improvements:

The O'Fallon Coal and Mining Company, near O'Fallon, has retimbered its main shaft; owing to changes being made by the B. & O. S. W. Railway in their track, which goes directly over the escapement shaft, the railroad company has sunk a new escapement shaft, and intend to fill up the old one as soon as arrangements can be made in making new airways in the new shaft. This coal company has also put in an additional boiler.

The Oakland Coal Company, of Belleville, has rebuilt the top works, and put in a shaker screen at its mine; the company has also relaid the pipe line, and are putting in larger pipes. This is the most successful cooperative mine in the district.

The Lenz Coal and Manufacturing Company's mine, Belleville, formerly owned by the Crown Coal & Tow Co., now leased by Mr. J. Maule, has equipped the mine by putting in electric mining machines, and a motor for the fan. This is the first of this kind in the district, and is working very successfully. The power is furnished by the Belleville and East St. Louis Electric Street Car Company.

The Murren Coal & Ice Company, at New Baden, Clinton county, has just finished its new hoisting shaft, which is 9x18 feet in the clear, and are now building the top works. The company has placed in position four boilers in batteries of two, also Litchfield engines. The capacity of the pit-cars is three and one-half tons. It is the intention to put in self-dumping cages; a shaker screen and air compressor are on the ground for mining machines.

The Pittenger & Davis Mining and Manufacturing Company, of Centralia, has equipped its escapement shaft and made it a hoisting shaft; owing to the small number of men employed there, and the clerical force required being the same, the work of the two mines is kept in the same books, so that it was found to be a difficult matter to separate the items, consequently the returns for both mines are given under one head and credited to the No. 3 mine.

*New Mines.*—A new mine is being sunk between Lenzburg and New Athens, St. Clair county, by the Kolb Coal Co., of Mascoutah. It is located on the Illinois Central railroad. The company expects to be ready to hoist coal next November.

A new mine has been sunk at Marissa, St. Clair county, and is now fully equipped; the capacity intended is about 500 tons per day. This mine is operated by a stock company made up of the citizens of Marissa, and is organized as the Superior Coal Co.