

Tons of coal consumed at mines.....	106,864
Number of fatal accidents.....	11
Number of non-fatal accidents.....	119
Total number of accidents.....	130
Number of employes to each fatal accident.....	423
Number of employes to each non-fatal accident.....	39
Tons of coal produced to each fatal accident.....	305,249
Tons of coal produced to each non-fatal accident.....	28,216
Average value per ton of lump coal at the mine.....	\$0.8513
Aggregate value of total product.....	\$2,573,100
Average number of days worked during the year.....	199

The present year has been one of general activity in the coal business, and there have been practically no strikes to interrupt this condition. The only trouble worthy of mention is the strike at the Decatur Coal Company's mine, at Niantic, Macon county. This mine was idle for nine months, on account of the miners insisting that it become a union mine, with all the conditions that go with such a mine. The Coal Company insisted that it was impossible to make a profit out of the mine under the then existing conditions, and it would be impossible to continue operating the mine under the terms demanded by the union, as it very materially increased the cost of production. After nine months' idleness the mine resumed work as a machine mine, the company in the mean time having put in an electric plant and installed a number of Jeffrey mining machines. As a result of the prolonged strike at Niantic the tonnage of Macon county will be nearly one-third less this year than last—quite a noticeable fact when compared with all the other counties comprising the Fourth District, which shows a considerably increased tonnage over last year. That the mines of this district are in a much safer and better condition, is evidenced by the small number of fatalities this year compared with the preceding year, notwithstanding there was 785,678 more tons of coal produced this year than last. This year the district produced 3,357,737 tons of coal, being 305,249 tons of coal mined for each life lost, and compares favorably with the older mining countries of the world.

In all the larger mines of this district hand mining is being gradually superseded by machines, as evidenced by the increase in the number of machines and the tonnage cut by them. The inefficient and antiquated method of ventilating mines with a furnace is being rapidly displaced by the more improved mechanical method—that of a fan. There have been more fans placed in the mines in this district during the past year than was ever put up in the same length of time since the mine inspection service was inaugurated. Quite a number of small mines that are operated exclusively for local trade have displaced the old furnace with a steam fan, which greatly improves the ventilation of such mines.

Mine Fires.—Early in the morning of August 5, 1898, fire was discovered in the boiler room of the Westville Coal Company's mine, Westville. Such rapid progress had been made by the fire before being discovered that it was an utter impossibility to save the building, which served the double purpose of a boiler room and an engine room. The mine being operated exclusively by electric machines, the fire destroyed the large dynamo located in the engine room. Fortunately the fire did no damage to the hoisting engine and boilers. After a period of thirty-eight days a new brick engine and boiler room had

been constructed and work was resumed. There were 250 men employed in the mine at the time the property was destroyed. The building destroyed was a wooden structure valued at \$1,000, partly covered by insurance. None of the workmen who were in the mine at the time of the fire were injured, as they were all hoisted out at the escape shaft.

All the curbing in the shaft, and all the top works at the mine of A. H. Bonnets, eight miles northwest of Danville, were destroyed by fire August 26, 1898. The fire was communicated to the shaft from the furnace, with which the mine was ventilated. Prior to the time of the fire the mine was what was known as a gin-shaft, that is, all the coal was hoisted by horse power. The mine was at once retimbered from bottom to top, and new steam hoisting machinery was substituted for the old horse power arrangement; a new ten foot fan was placed in position, with which the mine is now ventilated. Two days before the fire I made an examination of the mine and pointed out the danger always attendant upon the use of a furnace in the mine, especially where it is connected to one end of the hoisting shaft. Work was resumed November 1, giving employment to ten men, the same number employed before the fire. For a small mine it is now a model one in every respect.

On the night of October 6, 1898, a fire occurred at Hilliards' No. 2 mine, near East Peoria, Tazewell county, entirely destroying the pit tower. As there was no one around the mine at the time the fire broke out, it was impossible to determine its origin, but it was believed to be the work of an incendiary. The top works were rebuilt as quickly as possible, and the mine resumed operation. Forty-two men were temporarily thrown idle on account of the fire.

Abandoned Mines.—The most important mine abandoned during the year was that of the Illinois Coal Mining Company, at Bloomington. This mine was a new one, having been in operation scarcely a year. The seam of coal being worked was four feet thick and of splendid quality; the condition for mining could hardly have been more favorable, and the selling price was all that could be desired. The property would undoubtedly have been a paying one. No reason was assigned as to why the mine was abandoned, but quite a number of the people of Bloomington suspected and concluded that the company had been bought out by the McLean County Coal Co., which operates a mine, and the only one, in Bloomington. All of the machinery, which was of the very best kind, was removed to a new mine at Centralia, this state.

The old slope at East Peoria, which has been in operation for a number of years, was abandoned on account of some litigation with the former owners.

A shaft some two hundred feet deep, at Virginia, Cass county, that was operated in a small way for local trade for a number of years, was found to be a non-dividend paying investment, and was accordingly abandoned early in the year. Several small mines near Danville, which were operated on a small scale for local trade, have also been abandoned.

New Mines.—Some five years ago a joint stock company, composed of wealthy farmers and representative business men, residing in and around Colfax, McLean county, sunk a shaft there to seam No. 6 of the geological