

Total product of the mines tons.....	3,533,331
Tons of coal shipped on railroad cars.....	2,804,647
Tons supplied to locomotives at the mines.....	157,857
Tons sold to local trade.....	424,520
Tons consumed and wasted at the mine.....	146,307
Number of fatal accidents.....	24
Number of non-fatal accidents.....	146
Number of employes to each fatal accident.....	231
Number of employes to each non-fatal accident.....	38
Tons of coal produced to each fatal accident.....	147,222
Tons of coal produced to each non-fatal accident.....	24,201
Aggregate value of total product.....	\$3,205,734
Average value per ton, all grades, at the mine.....	\$0.9073

About one-half of the past year—during the fall and winter months—nearly all the mines in the district did an excellent business, and produced an unusually large amount of coal, which found a market at figures that permitted living wages to be paid the workmen, and left a reasonable margin of profit for those who had their money invested in the mining industry; but, as spring advanced there was a general falling off of trade, which was due to several causes, among which might be mentioned the uncertainty of the coal business on account of changes in the mining price, which caused a great number of the largest consumers to lay in a stock of coal late in the winter. There were two other reasons why this precaution was taken: The first and most important one being found in the fact that there seemed to be a fear of a general strike among the miners at the expiration of their "scale" year, when it became necessary to make a new agreement with the miners, and not knowing how long a strike of that character would last, nor what would ultimately be the outcome if such stoppage should be made. This condition spurred everyone who used coal in large quantities to stock up every ton of coal possible to be obtained. A further reason why this policy was pursued, the coal buying portion of the public thoroughly understood, on account of the strength of the miners' union, that there would, in all probability, be an advance secured in the price of mining, and a corresponding advance in the selling price of coal. Happily though, so far as the fear of a strike was concerned, it proved to be ill-founded, but the expected advance in the mining, and consequent selling price, was a reality, so that there was several cents saved on every ton of coal purchased before April 1, 1900. It is to be regretted that the facts will not warrant the making of such a favorable statement of the coal trade in this district during the other portion of the year; but, so far as it effects this district, there are two very good reasons why this is true. First, on account of the low price of mining prior to the formation of the miners' union, and the cheap freight rates to Chicago, the operators in Vermilion county, which is the basic point for the whole of the competitive coal field, had secured such a firm hold upon the Chicago market that the mines were running nearly every day, but with the advent of the miners' union, this condition of affairs was changed and the mining price equalized with the rest of the State; this, together with a change in freight rates in favor of Indiana caused a more uniform condition of mining, this part of the district having no advantages over any other part of the State, but it is alleged that such changes wrought an injustice to this part of the competitive coal field, and was to the very great advantage of the "Hoosier" state. Be that as it may, it is known that the mines of Indiana, which are keen competitors of this field, worked steadier than did the mines of Vermilion county. However, such conditions soon equalize themselves.

Prospective Mines.—A corporation known as the Christian County Coal Co., which is composed of some of the wealthiest men of that county, has organized a company for the purpose of sinking a mine at Taylorville, and operating extensively the seam of coal at that place, which is about eight feet thick and overlaid with a splendid roof. This seam of coal at this point lies nearly 500 feet beneath the surface, and is of an excellent quality, and as it can be mined as cheaply as any other seam in the State, and finds a ready sale at remunerative figures, it will beyond a doubt be one of the best paying mines in the whole State. The shaft is a large one, and will be equipped with the latest and best machinery obtainable.

The Minonk Coal Mining and Tile Works, at Minonk, is engaged in sinking a new hoisting shaft about three-quarters of a mile north of their old mine, on the Illinois Central railroad. This mine is unique in one respect, inasmuch as it is being sunk down on the old workings of the other mine, and will, therefore, have no shaft pillar at all. It will go down near the face of the workings in the other shaft, the object of which is two-fold; first, so as to avoid any extra cost in opening up the new mine, and the other is to improve the ventilation of the old mine, as they will be connected as soon as the new one is completed.

New Mines.—John Richardson, who operates a small mine for local trade near Shelbyville, has sunk another shaft near the old one, and is driving an entry from both mines towards each other as rapidly as possible so as to connect them for the purpose of making each one an escape-shaft for the other, and to improve the ventilation of both mines.

Dr. J. A. Bowman has sunk a new mine five miles northeast of Shelbyville. It is a shaft opening, 110 feet deep, and pierces seam No. 15 of the geological section which is nearly two feet thick. The coal is of a superior quality and finds a ready market in Shelbyville and surrounding country. It is equipped with a horse-hoister, and is operated for local trade only.

Michael Brophy, who has been operating a small mine close to Shelbyville for a number of years, has abandoned his old mine and sunk a new one, which is being worked in a small way for local trade.

B. F. Stretch, who also operates a small mine near Shelbyville, has finished sinking a new escape shaft, and now has it connected with the hoisting shaft so as to afford a ready means of exit in case of danger.

The Brookside Coal Co., of Danville, has sunk a new air shaft at their No. 2 mine at Grape Creek, which greatly improves the ventilation.

Arthur Jones & Sons, of Catlin, have sunk a new hoisting shaft near the old mine, and are engaged in driving entries from both mines towards each other so as to connect them for the purpose of making each an escapement shaft for the other, and to improve the ventilation of both mines.

Machine Mining.—The number of mines and the number of machines that have been in use this last year is considerably less than it was the past year. When the miners arranged their last annual scale of wages with the coal companies of this State, the differential between hand-mining and machine-mining was made so small that the coal companies allege that it does not pay to operate the mining machines, and that hand mining is, taking everything into consideration, cheaper than machine mining. However, the cost of production has been lessened by many of the largest coal companies installing mechanical haulage, which displaces a number of mules and a corresponding number of drivers.