

VAST BEDS OF COAL

Largest Holdings Under One
Ownership in United States
Are in Colfax County.

INCREASED OUTPUT

Two Million Tons Annually to Be Pro-
duced by the St. Louis, Rocky
Mountain and Pacific Railway.

The Mining and Engineering Journal for this week has an illustrated and authoritative write-up of the coal properties in the Raton district, Colfax County, acquired from the Maxwell Grant Company by the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Railroad Company, which is building a railroad from the eastern boundary of the Territory, at Des Moines, Union County, on the Colorado & Southern, to Elizabethtown, Colfax County. The following is taken from this article:

Having acquired the property of the Raton Coal and Coke Company, in northern New Mexico, the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain & Pacific Company, which was incorporated in New Mexico a month ago, has matured plans for a noteworthy increase in the output of steam and domestic bituminous coal and of coke. The company has in operation two new and well-equipped coal mining plants; one, with a single drift opening, at Blossburg, four or five miles west of Raton, New Mexico; another with three drift openings, at Van Houten, about ten miles southwest of Raton. The Van Houten plant dates from 1902, and the Blossburg plant from 1903. The former has electric haulage, the latter the tail-rope system; in both operations the maximum possible use is made of gravity.

These mines, now served by a branch of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, will have similar connections with a new railroad, 120 miles in length, to be constructed by the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain & Pacific Company. The railroad is to extend from Des Moines, New Mexico, on the Colorado & Southern Railway, 80 miles south of Trinidad, Colorado, to the Elizabethtown gold mining district in the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains, about 70 miles west of Raton.

The company's mineral property consists of 184,470 acres of coal land in fee simple, and coal rights and surface necessary for mining in 314,300 acres. The area controlled, about 800 square miles, is one-half as large

again as all of the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania, and five times as large as the entire Connellsville basin. This property is the largest body of coal land under one ownership in the United States. The coal lies in horizontal seams, mostly from 5 to 13 feet thick, and is mined by adits and entries along the seams into the mesas or foothills. The mines are dry and non-gaseous.

Examinations of the coal field have been made in behalf of Fisk & Robinson of New York by three well-known geologists and engineers, viz., Professor Orestes St. John; E. V. d'Inville, of Philadelphia, and William Griffith, of Scranton, Pennsylvania. With regard to the character and extent of the coal these engineers say:

"The property is not only extensive, but is well located and combines many of the principal factors which vouchsafe the integrity of a coal and coke proposition, and insure its commercial success.

"The geology, structure and topography of the Raton coal tract are all favorable to the regular occurrence of coal and for its economical mining. There are certainly three commercial coal seams, all outcropping above water level along the eastern escarpment of the mountain plateau, and therefore subject to drift mining.

"These three seams occur within an interval vertically of 800 feet. All yield good mining sections from 4 to 8 feet in thickness, the lowest, or Raton, seam being the only one now commercially developed, and, within the scope of existing mines, yielding 6 to 8 feet.

"The coal lies at very gentle angles of dip, often quite flat and rarely exceeding an inclination of more than 11.5 degrees. Some slight faults and dikes have been encountered and some intrusion of basaltic material causing the coal seam on either side, above or below, to be converted into a natural coke; but the region, as a whole, is singularly free from such effects, and such small dikes as have been met with have, in no case, caused any change in mining plans.

"Because of the thickness of the seams, the roof and floor ordinarily are not disturbed, either in driving entries or in working coal in the rooms. The floor is usually a hard slate, supported by massive Trinidad white sandstone below, and the roof is largely a tough slate in the Blossburg district, changing to sandstone in the Willow or Van Houten Canon.

"At Blossburg the coal seam nominally ranges from 5 to 7 feet, but the roof is comparatively poor and the timbering required is much greater than elsewhere in the field. The present limited average output is 500 tons per day. Such an enlargement of plant is justified as to secure an output of 1,000 to 1,500 tons a day. At the Van Houten mines an output of 200 tons per day can be readily secured from three mine openings, de-

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