



Wolgan Colliery at Newnes.

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THE COKE-WORKS BRANCH RAILWAY

With the growth of the coke trade it was decided to eliminate the self-acting inclined skipways and construct a standard gauge railway to the coke bench, where a staith was erected, permitting direct loading and more economic time-saving and labour costs. The new line was steeply up-graded and its entrance point, facing to "Down" trains, was placed in the main oil-works line at a distance of about 31m. 0c. from Newnes Junction. According to local information the branch was opened during 1908.

The coke-works branch was laid on the eastern side of the main line and its formation, in a north-easterly direction, was cut into the talus slopes for the greater part of its three-quarters of a mile length, the outer elevation being about four-hundred feet above the main line. Two cuttings were entered along the route, together with a reverse curve, before the line diverged at a facing point to form two adjacent dead-end sidings, that on the eastern side serving the new coke loading staith. Beyond this appurtenance a crossover led

to the westernmost track over which empty wagons were gravitated to the staith as required.

The extensions northward beyond the crossover were, in later years, utilised for gravity unloading of tank wagons bringing crude and other oils from Hartley Vale and Torbane for refining treatment, the material being piped to the storage tanks set at a lower level.

The lucrative coke traffic ceased when the Cobar smelting establishments closed about the 1911 period, a circumstance which led to the abandonment of the Corporation's coke-making plant at Newnes. The adjacent coal-mine continued to operate, with only a small output to cater for the oil-works and brick-yard needs, and also for the locomotives in use on the Wolgan Railway. However, the pit-head and winding engine unit proved expensive to maintain, consequently an adit was driven into the seam and became known as No. 1 Coal Tunnel. The new mine was located at the base of the talus slope in the vicinity of the south-western entrance point to the coal loading siding at 31m. 40c. The mine tramway, on reach-