The colliery at the time of the fire was producing on an average 55,000 tons of coal per month, and employed about 800 men.

There are three shafts sunk and used severally for coal, air and material. The main or coal shaft generally used as an upcast—although the current may be reversed—is 154 feet deep from surface to rail, 10½ feet wide by 24 feet long, and consists of three compartments, two for coal and one for men. It is sunk below the pavement to a depth of 7 feet in order to bring the cage platform level with the mine track. The Fan shaft, 143 feet, 11 feet in diameter, can be connected to either of the three fans, and is generally used as a downcast. The material shaft, 135 feet deep, is 10 feet wide by 18 feet long, and is also used for the endless haulage ropes, which are brought to the engine house located on the surface directly alongside.

These shafts are sunk about 1,900 feet from the crop. The surface in the vicinity is 89 feet above sea-level, while the pavement is 68 feet below sea-level. The surface from the shaft slopes gently to the shore line of the Atlantic ocean, distant 1,800 feet, where it breaks away abruptly in low cliffs, exposing the seams of coal and the remains of some old workings, supposed to be those of the French many years ago.

The seam worked, which is remarkably exempt from upthrows or downthrows, is known as the Phalen. It averages about 8′ 4″ of clear bituminous coal.

The dip of the seam is in an easterly direction, the angle or inclination of dip being about 1 in 15. The floor of the mine is a very gritty shale, and the immediate roof is also a shale, which readily falls at times, but is easily supported by timber. The plan of working is the ordinary "room and pillar"; the deeps, headways and levels are driven 12 feet wide, and the rooms 22 feet wide.

The size of the pillars left at present is 25 x 70. The present faces of the workings have reached a distance from the shaft of 5,700 feet in the North deep, 5,400 feet in the South deep, and 3,000 feet in the Angle deep.

The overhead cover at the face of the North deep is 519 feet in thickness of strata.

The mine made some 500 gallons of water per minute, but had also to take care of 800 gallons per minute from the Main and French slopes of Reserve, which quantity passed through a borehole in the barrier separating Dominion No. 1 from Reserve, and flowed along No. 3 South level to the water lodgement on the back North deep, from which it was pumped to the lodgement at the shaft bottom through a 7″ pipe. There are three water lodgements in the pit. One of 500,000 gallons capacity is located at the shaft bottom, one of 500,000 gallons capacity is about 2,000 feet from the