

Inglewood Coal-mine (13th October).—Work has only lately been resumed at this mine. Instructed Mr. Reargh to get new Act and safety-lamp.

Progress Coal-mine.—(23rd February): A slight show of gas was seen six months ago, so places are looked at every morning with safety-lamp. Wrote Mr. Brennan to provide a more efficient one. (17th October): Not working to-day. Roof bad, and coal thrown back in drive to be taken away as required. New safety-lamp not yet supplied. Wrote Mr. Brennan as to this and condition of mine.

Supreme Coal-mine.—Not inspected, as it has not been working this year.

Sir Francis Drake Coal-mine (31st October).—No one about. Work principally opencast.

Devil's Creek Coal-mine.—(28th February): Timbering in longer dip drive bad, but will be attended to if work goes on. (11th August): Found this mine had taken fire, probably through large quantity of slack. Manager agreed to block off mine-mouths to cut off air. This was done when inspected in October, and shaft which was uncovered was to be seen to.

Inangahua Coal-mine.—This adjoins Devil's Creek Mine, and Mr. Rutherford wrote in July complaining of the water from that mine being dammed back on him. I wrote from Wellington pointing out his remedy. (11th August): Shaft unfenced; attended to at once. Mr. Rutherford feared that the fire in adjoining ground would spread to his ground. I advised him to take out a strip of coal down to the level of the water and let down the roof.

Energetic Coal-mine (19th June).—Only two drives, which are well timbered. Ground bad. Subsequently abandoned.

Coghlan's Coal-mine.—(18th June). No sprags used, and air warm. (19th October): Still no sprags, and workings on south-west side too wide. These will be attended to.

Burke's Creek Coal-mine (19th October).—Two shafts and a dip-drive, the latter worked by water-balance. Both shafts uncovered, but will be seen to. Not working at present, as troubled with water.

Brunner Colliery.—(9th January): A fatal accident had occurred the previous day; it is referred to under the head of accidents. Workings confined to taking out pillars. Eleven thousand cubic feet of air circulating. This was considerably increased when I next inspected the mine in April. Reports kept and the Act observed. (30th September): A dip-drive and a few places off it are now working in the solid. Air here and at upper-pillar workings dull. Supposed inlets near fireclay-workings are to be seen to. On 30th October I note: "Pillar-workings where dull at last visit have air improved, and an overcast has been put in from dip-workings over level." Props at one or two places not well set, but plenty of timber. The north Brunner section, on the opposite side of the anticline from the other workings, is now opening. This mine was also inspected on the 4th December. Plan up to July. During the year Mr. Hodgson has been appointed mine-manager, Mr. Bishop taking the position of managing engineer. An electric plant has been fitted up for the transmission of power from the surface to the top of the dip-workings underground, where it is used to draw water in tanks from the dip. Also, a dross-washing and briquette-making plant has been erected, which has proved a success, and it is intended to recover the by-products of the coke, and to use them in the manufacture of the briquettes.

Coal-pit Heath Colliery.—(10th January): Worked from a dip-drive entering near the Brunner Mine mouth. Pillar-working similar to the Brunner Mine. A good few of the props giving, but these are being renewed where necessary. A good current of air, and, when inspected in April, 22,600 cubic feet per minute circulating, which, although a reduction, was still ample for the number of men (fifty-two) employed per shift. (30th September): Number of men increased to seventy-three and current to 28,100 cubic feet. Coal usually well spragged and propped. Air at return part of workings not very good, but to be rearranged to improve this. (3rd December): Air better than at last visit; a good current at every face. A little gas has been showing recently at one face. Reports kept; special and general rules, with required names, posted. Plan up to date.

Nine-mile Coal-mine (4th May).—Only two short drives in a 4ft. thick seam at Point Elizabeth. The roof is sound, but the Act is not observed. If the coal should be taken out extensively it will probably bring down a large slip on the beach unless proper support is left.

Blackball Coal-mine.—(20th February): This is an adit 1,170ft. long, driven to cut the coal which is expected to be met shortly. The ventilation is by furnace, the drive being wide enough to admit of two airways. Approved safety-lamps on hand. Fourteen men employed in all. (16th June): The coal was struck at 1,250ft., and there are two seams, 4ft. and 12ft. in thickness. Air good. No gas has yet been seen. Very well timbered. Report-book kept. I have since been informed that operations have been stopped pending railway connection. As a considerable area lies to the rise, at an angle of 1 in 5, there will be no charge for pumping, haulage will be done at a minimum, and the coal is said to be of excellent quality, so that this mine should have a good future when some means of taking away the coal is established.

Stillwater Lease (1st October).—Nothing further has been done at these drives, which have now caved in. The coal-seam, I am informed by Mr. Joseph Taylor, was highly inclined and very thin.

GENERAL.

All the working mines which have not certificated managers are under charge of managers holding permits, as provided by "The Coal-mines Act, 1891."

Henry Nuttall, trucker in the Brunner Mine, at the inquest on the death of Thomas Kennedy, showed complete ignorance of the special rules, and although he had changed places out of kindness to Kennedy, whose death resulted from his own act, it was desirable in the interests of safety, and also if the special rules were not to become a dead letter, that he should be prosecuted. The case was tried before Major Keddell, and Nuttall fined 10s. and costs for breach of special rule 46—absence from his post. Convictions have also been secured during the year by the Grey Valley Company for not spragging, and by the Westport Coal Company for riding on the trucks on the incline.