

Waihō Forks Lignite-mine, Waimate.—(11/8/98): The small amount of coal being got here is from an opencast pit about a mile and a half from the township. The upper portion of the seam is said to be a good gas-producing material. From general appearances, I am inclined to think that the deposits are extensive, and that a shaft sunk on the terrace near the railway-station should reach a seam at a reasonable depth. Having direct railway communication, a mine here could supply Waimate (seven miles distant) and the surrounding district with fuel at a reasonable price, and will, no doubt, be of value in years to come. Present output is mainly for owners' private use.

Elephant Hill, Waimate.—(11/8/98): A lignite-mine (for private use) has been worked intermittently on the Elephant Hill Station for several years, but does not appear to have previously come under the notice of the Mines Department. It is situate about fifteen miles from Waimate. A good thick seam of lignite (similar in appearance to that at Ngapara) is found in the face of a hill, and headings have been driven into it for a considerable distance. These are maintained in very creditable condition. I understand no lignite is sold from this mine.

NORTH OTAGO.

Wade's Coal-pit, Kurow (Scott and Porter).—(2/11/98): The seam is almost vertical. The level in which Scott was working at my last inspection has been driven about 4 chains from the dip-tunnel, the coal getting gradually worse. At the face it is 8 ft. wide, and quite worthless. Further back the width was only 4 ft. About a chain from the bottom of the tunnel a cross-cut has been driven to another seam, averaging barely 3 ft. wide, of very medium quality. Air good.

Cairns's Coal-pit, Kurow (W. B. Cairns).—(2/11/98): The pit is at present idle, and flooded out. The workings are practically under the bed of the Awakino River, and some weeks ago a heavy inflow of water was met with. During the progress of pumping out the water, the pump-piston became detached from the piston-rod, and rendered the pump useless. The water has since filled the pit completely, and Mr. Cairns is now endeavouring to hire a pump to drain the mine sufficiently low to enable him to effect repairs to his own pump.

Sutherland's Coal-pit, Wharekuri (D. Sutherland).—(2/11/98): At my last inspection a tunnel was being driven to open out this mine. After the coal was reached it was found that old workings existed on each side, and only a very limited area was available to the tunnel. The seam is nearly vertical, and varies from 20 ft. to 40 ft. wide. A new tunnel has been commenced some distance further up the gully, in expectation of reaching solid coal. For many years past coal has been worked from the gully on a small scale by different parties, but from what I can learn no plans appear to have been kept.

St. Andrew's Coal-mine, Papakaio (T. Nimmo).—(3/11/98): This mine has been opened out on a correct system, the headings having been driven to the boundary in the first instance. The pillars are now being extracted from the back, leaving all goaf behind. Ventilation, &c., kept up to the mark. The pit is well and carefully managed.

Prince Alfred Coal-mine, Papakaio (John Willetts).—(3/11/98): The old mine is now almost worked out. A new tunnel has recently been driven (from a point lower down the gully than the old entrance), which has cut the seam to the dip of the old mine-workings. An upcast shaft has also been sunk. The coal appears variable and faulty. Ventilation very good. Survey has recently been made, and a copy of the plan supplied me.

Ngapara Coal-mine, Ngapara (W. Nimmo).—(4/11/98): Since my last visit the workings have been continued in the solid coal. The top of the air-shaft has also been boxed up for some distance above the surface. Ventilation good, and workings maintained in safe condition. Mr. Nimmo has recently purchased the land formerly held under lease for mining purposes.

Shag Point Colliery, Shag Point (Thomas Shore, manager).—(7/2/98): With the exception of a couple of headings in No. 4 seam, all the workings are in No. 5 seam, which does not average more than 2 ft. 9 in. thick. The coal is thinning towards the rise, and from present appearances the area above shaft-bottom level will be exhausted in the course of a year or so. The method of working is longwall, and little or no coal is lost. In No. 4 seam the coal is of a good workable thickness, but, unfortunately, has bands of stone and unsaleable coaly dirt running through it. The coal from No. 5 seam is of splendid quality, but I am afraid it will not pay to work to the dip of the shaft-bottom, unless the shaft is sunk deeper and the seam cut by a level tunnel, so as to obviate hauling up an incline. I examined all the workings, also the second outlet-shaft, and found everything satisfactorily conducted; air good; and the Act generally well observed. (14/11/98): The coal in the rise-workings in No. 5 seam is being rapidly exhausted. On the north-east side of the shaft the strata between No. 5 seam and a small seam generally found above it has run out, so that the two now appear as one seam. Ventilation and general arrangements satisfactory. It is proposed to sink the shaft an additional 300 ft., and to drive a level tunnel from the shaft-bottom to the dip of the measures to intersect No. 5 seam, at a depth of, say, 700 ft. below the level of the shaft-top. This, if carried out, will cause a certain area of the workings to be submarine. Nothing is yet settled in respect to this proposed development.

Allandale Colliery, Shag Point (W. Everest, secretary).—(8/2/98): At this colliery a considerable amount of new work has been in hand for some time, and the new incline tunnel referred to in my last report was connected with the dip-workings from the old tunnel shortly after my last visit. The hauling plant has been moved to the new tunnel-mouth, and sidings laid, screens erected, &c. This is now the working outlet of the mine, the old tunnel being used for the purposes of ventilation and as a second outlet. Underground, the opening-out has been vigorously pushed ahead. On the south side the coal retains a good average thickness and quality, but going north it is thinner and not so good, owing to the occurrence of bands of stone and numerous small faults. This latter condition causes areas of bad roof, necessitating the use of a good deal of timber, and naturally the places so affected are necessarily rough, but I had no reasonable cause for fault-finding as regards the safety or otherwise of these places. I travelled through the entire workings