

upcast-shaft and adopt fan-ventilation in lieu of the present furnace. (28/10/98): In company with the manager, Mr. W. M. Shore, I inspected the working-places throughout, and found things in reasonably good order. In the eastern extremity of the workings safety-lamps are used, and in one of the leading rise-places I found some firedamp, which the men said had made its appearance very suddenly during the previous hour, and they had, in consequence, moved to a working-place lower down. The attention of the deputy was subsequently drawn to it, and I learned from him that all traces of the gas had gone by the end of the shift. From inquiries instituted, it appears that a brattice-sheet had been displaced by one of the truckers. This had the effect of cutting the air-current off the extreme rise-places temporarily, and so admitted of a small accumulation of gas, which, considering the phenomenal fall in the atmospheric pressure during the forenoon (nearly 1 in. in the barometer in some three hours), could not be wondered at under the circumstances. I visited these rise-places again after the interval of a few weeks, and found everything quite clear. The company has recently sold out to a Home syndicate, and steps are to be taken to establish a connection with the shaft of the adjoining Castle Hill Mine, now standing, but owned by the same syndicate. This, when accomplished, should have the effect of materially increasing the amount of air in the mine.

*Record Reign Mine, Kaitangata* (Robert Penman, lessee).—(14/7/98): A small mine bearing the above name has been opened on Landell's Estate, on the crown of the hills crossed by the new coast road. It is adjacent to the small pits formerly worked by M. Carson and G. Cormack, and works the same seam. Two men and a boy are employed. Workings are in good order. Ventilation adequate, and report-book, &c., properly kept.

*Smith's Mine, Wangaroa, near Kaitangata* (J. Smith, lessee).—(14/7/98): The seam here is 10 ft. to 12 ft. thick, and the workings in good order, with any amount of air. The area and output are very limited.

#### CENTRAL OTAGO.

*Jones's Pit, Coal Creek*.—(4/6/98): The lessee has got a block of coal stripped for current requirements, and proposes to sluice off a lot of surface in the ensuing spring. This is a step I have repeatedly urged. The mine is an open quarry, with an exposed face of coal of some 50 ft. in thickness, and an unknown quantity underfoot.

*McPherson's Pit, Coal Creek, Roxburgh*.—(4/6/98): The present working-face appears from 20 ft. to 26 ft. thick. A good area of surface is now being stripped, as recommended by me at my last visit. The stripping varies from 6 ft. to 8 ft. in thickness.

*Craig's Perseverance Mine, Coal Creek, Roxburgh*.—(4/6/98): Mr. Craig has had considerable trouble with fires in his mine. The seam is close on 100 ft. wide, and lies from an angle of 45° to vertical, entailing much difficulty in working. In consequence of fire since my last visit, he had to let the ground down to smother out the fire, and reopen his mine. At this date everything is in nice order, and the workings well ventilated. The water gets away by a race without being pumped.

*T. McLoughlin's Pit, Shingle Creek*.—(3/6/98): A small pit, worked on a very limited scale, for local use. The seam appears on edge, and is very much disturbed and deteriorated, a good percentage being of a soft mullocky nature. There is no prospect of its ever being a great success. Air good, and workings in fair order.

*Mrs. Drummey's Coal-mine, Alexandra*.—(17/9/98): This is a new pit which has been recently sunk between Bruce's and Lett's mines, and of which no notice has been sent. At this date the shaft is down to, but not through, the coal-seam. (4/10/98): Received notice from Mrs. Drummey that operations were commenced on the 12th July last.

*Alexandra Coal-mine, Alexandra* (W. Thomson, owner).—(16/9/98): Mr. Thomson has recently taken up an area of ground adjacent to his former leasehold and to the dip of his present workings, and is now driving on the dip of the seam below the levels from his shaft. The coal appears to continue very good as far as it is yet proved. Working-places in good order, and ventilation adequate. Plans of recent workings up to date, but the boundary of the workings of several years ago (not shown on plan) ought to be surveyed. Under date of the 4th October, 1898, I drew the owner's attention to this.

*McQueenville Coal-mine, Alexandra* (Robert Lett, owner).—(19/9/98): As more men are employed at this mine than is allowable under the permit held by Mr. J. S. Johnston (as manager to Mr. Lett), the pit is now managed by Mr. James Howie, who holds a second-class certificate. Ten men are employed getting coal. The places are in good order, and excellently ventilated. Rules posted, and plan up to date.

*Bruce's Coal-mine, Alexandra* (Bruce, Simpson, and Co., owners).—(17/9/98): This is a new pit which has been sunk within the last year or so, and is now opening out. It is situate on the Manuhirikia Road, east of Lett's mine. The seam has a workable thickness of about 6 ft., a band of stone which runs through the coal bringing the gross thickness to nearly 7 ft. Places in good order, but ventilation rather slack at faces, owing to stoppings being imperfect. Rules posted, and survey brought up to date.

*Dungey's Pit, Cambrians* (C. Dungey).—(21/9/98): Working opencast, Seam 7 ft. thick, overlaid by 9 ft. of shingly stripping. Short length of face kept stripped for current requirements. Place very well worked, but a little more batter at the sides is desirable.

*Hughes's Pit, Cambrians* (J. Ormond Hughes).—(21/9/98): At this visit I was fortunate enough to find Mr. Hughes at the pit. As reported previously, this pit is kept in a very unworkmanlike condition. The opencast face, which has been worked for many years, is about a quarter of a mile long, but no ground is stripped in advance, and coal is being got anyhow and anywhere possible. I pointed out to Mr. Hughes the unsatisfactory and somewhat dangerous nature of the