

*Milton Colliery, Akatore, Milton* (Neil McGilp).—(8/11/99): Opencast and drive; 22 ft. of coal and 6 ft. to 8 ft. of stripping. Stripping well ahead of the coal in the open work, except in one place near the centre of face, where overhanging mass of loose clay and coal was ready to fall at any moment. Drew owner's attention to this, and instructed him to bring the loose stuff down. One man putting in a drive on the south side of the claim, where the stripping was becoming heavy. The first set of timber at the entrance was very insecure. I instructed the man doing the work how to fasten his sets together with longitudinal stays, otherwise, the top being slippery wet clay, the sets of timber might give way and the drive collapse.

*Early Bank Coal-mine, Akatore, Milton* (Alexander Love).—(8/11/99): Entrance to mine locked up; no one about. I subsequently saw Mr. Love, who informed me that the main drive was in about 2 chains, and a cross-drive off the main also 2 chains in. This was all the work done, and as trade was quiet Mr. Love thinks of leasing the mine.

*John Reid, Adams' Flat, Milton*.—(7/11/99): Opencast. No stripping done in advance, and face vertical. No batter whatever. No one working at the time of my visit. Found a keg of powder with the top off, and a sack thrown over it, in a hole cut in the coal on one side of the claim. After some trouble I found Reid, who promised to remove the powder to some safe place.

*Paskell's Coal-mine, Adams' Flat, Milton* (John Thomas Paskell).—(7/11/99): Opencast. Owner thinks of driving, as the stripping (some 20 ft. of cemented quartz-grit) was becoming too heavy. The coal is 8 ft. thick, and, as both it and the cover resembles Benhar, I recommended Mr. Paskell to visit that mine, and to obtain the services of a good miner to open out his own mine on similar lines. Stripping overhanging at one place near the centre of claim, which I drew owner's attention to, and on my return to Dunedin I wrote him about it. This is one of the likeliest places I know where an accident may occur. The coal is simply mined out and the top stuff allowed to follow, when it is carted away, no attempt being made to strip in advance, or even to put a little batter on the gravel-face.

*Lovell's Flat Coal-mine (lately Burnwell), Lovell's Flat* (J. Carruthers, manager).—(2/11/99): Mr. Robert Glendining, of the Shag Point Colliery, has recently acquired this colliery, and appointed Mr. James Carruthers manager under the supervision of Mr. Thomas Shore, of Shag Point. These gentlemen were very busy altering, enlarging, and, where necessary, renewing plant and workings. Engine and drum, two boilers, and two new screens are being erected on the surface. A special Tangye pump is landing from Home, and will replace the tanks on the cage for unwatering the pit. Underground timbers at pit-bottom are being renewed and heightened. A pair of new north levels are set away from near pit-bottom, which will enable the manager to cut off some of the old workings, which are heavily fallen. I advised him to stop off these fallen places as soon as possible, as they were showing signs of heating, and the temperature of the air in the rise-workings was thereby increased. The heading to No. 1 shaft is being extended, and has yet 5 chains to go. Air in pit slack to-day. New owner is sparing no expense to make this colliery equal to modern requirements.

*McDougall's Tuakitoto Coal-mine, Lovell's Flat*.—(2/11/99): Owner works alone, lifting bottoms; second outlet, which is the return airway, passable, but low in places. Air good.

*Benhar Coal-mine, Benhar* (Peter McSkimming).—(3/11/99): Bords all in good order, pillars being fair size, and roof strong. Air good, and could be improved by stopping the ends of a few bords on the dip. Rules posted. No plan. Gave owner notice to have survey made and plan forwarded.

*Kaitangata Colliery* (W. M. Shore, manager).—(1/11/99): The new owners (New Zealand Collieries, Railway, and Oil Syndicate) have recently appointed Mr. Thomas Barclay and Mr. John Shore under-managers to Mr. W. M. Shore, who is in ill-health, and have also engaged Mr. William McCormack, of Granity, specially to install the recently imported coal-cutting and holing machines. Mine standing to-day, but a number of roadsmen executing repairs, filling and drawing dross off the roadways in south workings, putting on the finishing touches to the endless-rope-haulage system in the Stone drive (which will save half a mile of hand-drawing), a shift working two iron men in the east workings, and the shift at work in No. 2 winch dip, Shore's seam, making ready to drive a pair of levels to meet another pair being driven from the Castle Hill Mine for new return airway and second outlet. These levels are being pushed on with all possible speed night and day at each end, and, having 24 chains to go, Mr. Shore expects that it will be some time in April before communication is established. The present main return airway, which is also the travelling-way and second outlet, shows signs of deterioration, and is not so passable as might reasonably be expected in a colliery employing 200 men underground (110 men on the day-shift and ninety on the afternoon- and night-shifts). The furnace is also showing signs of wear, so the completion of the new air-courses and the utilisation of the splendid furnace and air-shaft in the Castle Hill Mine will be of material advantage to this colliery. All work to the dip communicating with the winding-shaft is now stopped and the pump drawn, and Mr. Shore purposes using the winding-engines for the endless-rope-haulage system which the company intends establishing throughout the mine. All coal sent out is now being got from the south side (pillar- and head-coal) and from the north and east workings advancing and opening out up to No. 5 fault. The south workings are gradually being finished and stopped off. The weight on pillars to the rise has caused them to sink, and roof is low. I travelled through all the places, and found some of them partially obstructed by falls; examined carefully for gas, but did not find any. Lamp-station, placarded, on the heading at the entrance to the higher workings. Roadways are dry and dusty, and the levels are watered twice a week. Air very warm in this section, which I drew Mr. Shore's attention to. In the north and east sections the roadways and working-places are in excellent order. Air dull in machine-heading owing to faces being so far from return. Mr. Barclay (who went round with me owing to Mr. Shore being unwell) explained that a level was being pushed on which would shortly prick through at the heading-face. In this section a shot fired attracted my attention, and