

of intake air, was remedied by the stopping being finally closed after repairs had been effected. About 350 safety-lamps are in daily use, and carefully registered, cleaned, and locked by the lamp-trimmer in the cabin at surface. A damaged safety lamp returned to the cabin by a pony-driver had apparently been wilfully damaged, but the evidence obtainable was not strong enough to make a case of. Examinations are regularly made by the workmen's representatives, and copies of their reports are recorded in a book kept for the purpose in the office at the mine. Reports of examination and inspections by mine-manager, underviewers, deputies, firemen, engineer, and examiner of ropes and chains regularly recorded in proper books kept for the purpose. Copies of general and special rules posted, and plans to date. Ten visits of inspection were paid during the year.

Castle Hill Colliery, Kaitangata (New Zealand Coal and Oil Company, owners; W. Carson, mine-manager).—(23/2/1905): This visit was paid in connection with an accident the previous day, whereby Mr. R. S. Jordan, general mine-manager for the New Zealand Coal and Oil Company, became suffocated by smoke and heat while exploring the seat of an underground fire in the vicinity of the ventilating-furnace at Castle Hill Colliery. I reported on this accident fully to you under date 27th February, 1905. (19/4/1905): On the 15th instant an explosion of gas occurred in the furnace level caused by gas from a stopping which had been opened to allow of re-entry into No. 4 dip section. The manager had taken the precaution of having all the men out of the mine, there being only the officials engaged present when the stoppings were opened. The occasion was also well chosen, being Saturday afternoon, when all work was done except the special job in hand. An error of judgment had apparently been committed by opening the stoppings too wide and allowing an undue proportion of foul air from No. 4 section into the return airway, and passing same over the living fire at ventilating-furnace, and not utilising the dumb drift as might have been done. Work has mainly been confined to the extraction of pillars in main seam, and to crosscut workings in same section. The main stone-drive extension eastward is being slowly advanced. Generally, mine in good order and an adequate supply of timber kept in use. One place in the pillar-workings looked as though it was insufficiently timbered, but, on examination, the roof was found to be exceptionally hard and strong. Robert Donaldson, twenty, trucker, died on the 16th August, 1905, from concussion of brain due to injuries inflicted by a runaway box on a heading the previous day. It is difficult to understand how Donaldson became caught. He was supposed to keep his station at the foot of the heading, and, on hearing the runaway, one step in either direction would have taken him clear of the box. Five visits of inspection were made during the year.

Wangaroa Coal-mine, Kaitangata (Joseph Smith, lessee).—Coal mined as required for local consumption.

Mainholm Colliery, Conical Hills, Waipahi (W. Lischner).—(19/5/1905): Stripping 8 ft. to 10 ft. in depth, and kept well advanced ahead of working coal-face.

CENTRAL OTAGO.

W. J. Tonkin's Property, Ettrick.—Boring operations are being conducted to prospect for coal at Moa Flat. It is proposed to sink a shaft 50 ft. or more in depth to test the area.

Coal Creek Collieries, Coal Creek Flat, Roxburgh (R. Pilling, jun., secretary; J. Barber, mine-manager).—Leasehold mine.—(3/2/1905): Opencast pit in good order. (29/9/1905): One man stripping off overburden and two men getting coal. I instructed the manager to discontinue throwing the stripped material into the worked-out portion of the mine, owing to the liability to spontaneous ignition in proximity to the coal-seam.

Freehold Mine.—(29/9/1905): The main drive was driven 8 chains, where an upthrow fault was met, the coal driven through now being crushed. The places are driven 7 ft. wide and pillars 6 ft. square are left. The workings, roadways, and air-courses are in good order. Ventilation good; rules posted; plan kept; and report-book to date.

McPherson's Coal-pit, Coal Creek, Roxburgh (Mrs. M. McPherson, lessee; A. McPherson, manager).—(3/2/1905): This visit was paid in connection with a fatal accident on the 1st February, whereby William Williams, miner, was killed by a fall of coal from the face, where he was working temporarily. (Particulars of the accident on list appended.) I examined the pit, which was found in good order. (29/9/1905): Operations are now being carried on in the vicinity of the high face, and the coal is being taken out perpendicular with the overburden. Notice was subsequently served on the lessee under date the 4th October, requiring her to maintain the stripping at a depth of 10 ft. from the working coal-face. (21/10/1905): On revisiting the pit I found that the overburden was being kept stripped well back from the working-face.

Craig's Perseverance Coal-mine, Coal Creek Flat, Roxburgh (James Craig, lessee; W. Craig, permit).—(29/9/1905): Toward the end of last year a "weight" occurred over the north-western portion of the dip workings, causing the area to heat. Eight stoppings were then put in, and the area closed off. On this date a quantity of CO₂ was draining off, and I recommended the manager to double the stoppings and fill in with ashes, which was done. The working-faces were well ventilated. (21/10/1905): The stoppings were cooler than on the occasion of former visit. Although firedamp has not been detected, as a precautionary measure the mine is now examined with a safety-lamp prior to the men entering to work. Report-book to date; plan kept; and rules posted.

Progress Colliery (Gully Pit) Roxburgh (A. Edmeades, licensee).—Unless a pumping plant be erected, very little coal can be won under present conditions. The licensee announces his intention to abandon the area.

Perseverance Colliery, Alexandra (R. M. Finlay, lessee).—(7/3/1905): Hauling plant and pumping machinery have been removed. The mine-mouth and shaft are securely fenced. The lease has been duly cancelled and the area abandoned.