South Otago.

Fernhill Colliery, Abbotsford.—Owing to recent wet weather and falls in old workings, water-percolation has been considerable on the north side of haulage heading. Coal won, however, has been obtained from the south side of the heading. Repairs to air-shaft are under way.

Freeman's Colliery, Abbotsford.—Owing to spontaneous heating, a considerable portion of Nos. 7 and 9 dip pillars were recently sealed up. No. 10 dip is being opened on a panel-system on trial, the seam having been previously worked by bord and pillar. Ventilation adequate throughout the mine. Several places not in actual use required fencing, as pointed out to the mine-manager. Rules posted; report-books and plan to date.

Green Island Colliery, Green Island.—Some heating had arisen in the waste, and water-inflow having increased, the mine was closed down temporarily. The roof was usually bad and hard to keep where troubled by slip or thread faults.

Jubilee Colliery, Saddle Hill.—Development was proceeding to dip, where the seam was found, having a band of stony inferior coal in the centre. Rise-pillars continue to be successfully drawn. The sand overlying the coal-seam effectively smothers and minimizes spontaneous ignition in the waste. Furnace-ventilation good.

Saddle Hill No. 1 Colliery, Saddle Hill.—Under the new furnace-ventilation good air was being circulated, and working-places were adequately ventilated. Pillar and head coal-extraction was conducted safely. Substantial brick and ash stoppings were in on the line of waste, where spontaneous ignition was held in subjection. Second outlet travelling-way was maintained in good order.

Saddle Hill No. 2 Colliery, Saddle Hill.—Pillar and head coal-working was continued safely. Roof-pressure was causing pillars to sink and floor to rise, whereby the face roadways were low in places. Under fan-ventilation air was well conducted by brattice to working-faces. Any leakage of black-damp from the waste was being rapidly diluted, and carried direct to the return airway. Owing to "creep," a considerable area of coal-seam which was standing pillared is considered as lost.

Lauriston Colliery, Brighton.—Ventilation good; mine in good order; rules posted.

Ferndale Coal-mine, Taieri Beach.—A small output is mined for local requirements.

Waronui Colliery, Milton.—Electricity is utilized for fan-drive and dip-pumping. The main and tail rope system of haulage is in vogue. The dip is driven 800 ft. easterly, and levels north and south; all narrow work, the several sections being laid off on a panel-system, which will enable their being blocked off with only two stoppings when finally worked out.

McGilp's Coal-mine, Milton.—Driving in solid seam 16 ft. in thickness. The return airway required brattice and attention for adequate ventilation.

Taratu Colliery, Lovell's Flat.—Present work consists of extraction of pillars and head coal in No. 2 mine. The dip was being pumped dry in order to resume development in that direction. Ventilation good; report-books kept. The owners' intention was to reopen the shaft workings, which had been standing for two years, and were filled with water.

Hawthorn Den Coal-mine, Kaitangata.—A small mine, worked for local supplies.

Wangaloa Coal-mine, Kaitangata.—A small mine, worked for land-sale only.

Longridge Coal-mine, Kaitangata.—Levels are driven, and the thin seam (3 ft.) is worked longwall.

Kaitangata Colliery, Kaitangata.—Prospecting on north side being confined to a rising heading by a stone drive into the fault. No. 5 dip section: The No. 2 heading and south extension sections being finished, were closed with permanent sand and ash-fire stoppings. Pillaring in Mundy's dip section continues, and No. 6 dip section is being driven and developed. Pillar-places in No. 3 lift, Oliver's dip, were in good working-order. The seam here was 20 ft. to 25 ft. in thickness, with a hard conglomerate roof. Nos. 20 and 21 dip sections were being extended, chiefly with a view to connection with No. 2 mine at a future date. I tested the air in return airway at foot of upcast air-shaft with gas-testing lamp, which showed the presence of about ½ per cent. of firedamp. Removal of explosives magazines on surface to more distant sites is under consideration. During the year a complete new electric light and power plant was installed, also a new Ingersoll air-compressor, and additional steam-boiler power was added to the plant, which was being modernized in every respect.

Kaitangata No. 2 Colliery, Kaitangata.—Development was proceeding, and a pair of headings, with levels to south. Boiler-plate reinforcement-rings were placed in position where the new drive crossed the old workings.

Castle Hill Collieries, Kaitangata.—North side workings in No. 7 dip are finished and stopped off. Coal was mostly obtained from behind a roll, where the seam unexpectedly thickened to 20 ft., with a local change in dip towards easterly. Four pairs of men working in the Jordan's seam. Travelled airway to ventilating-furnace; all in good order. The man-hoisting emergency apparatus is regularly reported on, and is stated to be in good working-order.

Benhar Colliery, Stirling.—Work consisted of bringing several pillar and head coal places back from the "fault." Warned the manager to be careful in cases where, although the roof appeared to be strong, blocks of coal might be liable to come away from clay-partings in the roof. The bulk of output is used on the property in connection with the owners' stoneware and pottery works. During the year 4,000 tons of pipeclay was mined.

Clydevale Coal-pit, Clydevale.—An opencast pit worked for station requirements.

Mainholm Coal-pit, Pomahaka.—An opencast pit. During the year 3,058 tons of lignite was produced.

Central Otago.

Coal Creek Collieries, Roxburgh.—The seam at the old mine is still afire at outcrop above water-level. The new dip is driven in a block of coal, which is, unfortunately, three-parts crushed, and inferior; but drives are taken narrow, and care exercised against spontaneous ignition underground.