

rope system would be better. There are four consecutive inclines worked by the ropes, the extreme top being about 2,300 feet above the bottom. The lengths are approximately as follow: First incline, 32 chains; second incline, 60 chains; third incline,  $58\frac{3}{4}$  chains; and fourth incline,  $31\frac{1}{2}$  chains. This is a fine coal field, and should not be kept back; the present output, according to the lease, should be 17,000 tons per annum. In December, 1882, a number of boys were unregistered, and one under thirteen years of age was not attending school. Mr. Ferguson dismissed him. Special rules are gazetted. The reports are kept.

11. *Banbury Coal Mine, Westport*.—In the reports for 1881 and 1882 it was stated that artificial ventilation was to be established in this mine. On the 10th March, 1882, I noted: "The air is not good, as it backs; Mr. Elliott proposes building a chimney." On the 27th November: "The furnace is not lighted, and the air backs . . . . Made inquiries among the men, and found that complaints were made about the air." On the 4th April, 1883, I visited the mine and found the air worse than ever. A district on one side of the main level, and offering no inducement to the air to circulate, employed eight men, who were consequently without ventilation. In one place only was there a little indication of a current. Tried two of the outlets to the cliff, which are supposed to ventilate the mine, and in one the anemometer failed to turn, while in the second the air reversed; so Mr. Elliott agreed that the only way would be to sink a shaft on the south side of the main heading and build a 12-feet by 6-feet furnace. It seems that the former furnace was situated on the edge of the cliff, which fell away when the pillars were worked. Except with regard to ventilation, the mine seems very carefully managed. Three slight accidents occurred during 1882. On the last occasion of my visiting the mine a sad accident occurred to a little boy, four years old, who fell off the stage at the screens. I was standing close by, with Mr. Elliott, at the time, but did not see the child till he had fallen. This accident has already been reported at some length, not so much for the purpose of explaining the cause, which was simple enough, but because I thought it my duty to step a little outside the ordinary routine of an Inspector's duties in order to bring before the department the state of isolation in which the population at this mine are living. There is no road to Westport, no telegraphic communication, and no proper trolley on the railway. In this case the child laid sixteen hours without medical attendance, and then died. Although Dr. Thorpe assures me that this case must, under any circumstances, have terminated fatally, yet there are many accidents—and no place is more likely for them than a colliery—where the timely application of skilled treatment would save life. A telegraph would be of great service to the company and community at large, not only commercially speaking, but also to summon aid to wounded persons. Last year I remarked on the dangerous practice of riding on the trucks up and down the incline. It is morally certain that if this continues somebody will be killed. There have been many accidents to the wagons and some hair-breadth escapes to passengers. The difficulty in stopping it is that no proper road exists. The incline is 1,800 feet high and in places exceedingly steep, so no doubt there are many people who cannot walk without great inconvenience. Mr. Elliott states that he has forbidden the custom, and showed me letters to that effect addressed to the men in charge; but the fact remains that it is a general practice, and sooner or later Mr. Elliott will find that forbidding a thing on paper and allowing his orders to be daily disregarded will avail nothing. In reply to a letter on this subject, addressed to Mr. W. H. Dickson, general manager, the following reply was sent: "The practice to which you refer has come under my personal observation, and been absolutely forbidden by me. I have again written Mr. Elliott on the subject, and will adopt your suggestion as to making a special rule to meet the difficulty. I think it right, however, to state that the cause of the practice, viz., the want of a track to Denniston, is one which is not in the province of this company to remove. We have communicated repeatedly both with Government and County Council on the subject, but, owing to some difference of opinion between these bodies, the work remains unperformed." On the 3rd April a boy, aged eleven years, was working on the surface, without attending school. The contention was that there was no proper school, and that therefore the boy came under the exemption provided by law. Mr. Elliott and the boy's father expressed themselves willing to keep him from work, but I thought it better to report the matter, and did so accordingly. The works of this company are extending considerably, and they are putting down a fine endless-chain plant. This is the first in the colony, and will be a mile and a half long, eventually coming out at "Smith's outcrop." The engine is a single 20-inch cylinder (with provision for adding another cylinder) and 4-feet stroke; chain,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch; the grade varying, but the mean grade up hill for the load. Some of the refuge-holes in the incline had become receptacles for rubbish, contrary to General Rule 5; but immediately on this being pointed out men were put on to clear them. Reports and plans kept, the latter checked by the Inspecting Engineer of the Mines Department, and found to be correct. Timbering well attended to.

12. *Energetic Coal Mine, Reefton*.—Has done little or nothing since last report.

13. *Golden Treasure Coal Mine, Reefton*.—Visited the 14th November, 1882, when no work was being done.

14. *Lankey's Gully Coal Mine*.—Has changed hands. It was visited on the 4th November last and appeared to be worked on a better system.

15. *Newcastle Coal Mine, Reefton*.—This mine is carefully worked, but dynamite was taken in loose. I wrote to Mr. Breen on the subject.

16. *Golden Fleece Coal Mine, Reefton*.—Has been inspected twice during last year. Nothing to report.

17. *Dugan's Coal Mine, Boatman's*.—The big rock mentioned in last year's report has fallen. This mine is too wide. Owner promised to keep it within bounds.

18. *Burke's Coal Mine, Boatman's*.—Belongs to the owner of No. 17. Nothing to report.

19. *New Durham Coal Mine, Reefton*.—Work has been carried on here at various points. A number of drives have been put in, where, if the money had been spent in putting a pair of heads right into the hill, it would, I think, have been better.

20. *Brunner Coal Mine, Greymouth*.—Was inspected twelve times during 1882, and this year