

Mr. Kilgour, owner of this colliery, and examined the surface arrangements. Though not perfectly completed, everything appeared well constructed and with due regard to safety. Mr. Kilgour informed me that Mr. John May was manager; and also pointed out that, as men would not be raised or lowered in the shaft, exemption from the safety-cage and detaching-hook portions of the Act would not be the means of endangering human life. On the afternoon of the same day I met Mr. May, who stated that he was not the manager, but merely engaged to look after the plans; he, however, accompanied me through the workings. The report was kept by Mr. R. Lawrie, who said that he had never seen any gas. On the 7th December I again met Mr. Kilgour, and examined the mine with Mr. James Hodgson, manager. As the output of coal had not then commenced no men were below ground. A capable dam had been constructed to keep back the river when in flood, and ample pumping machinery put down to deal with the mine water. This is not the mine that was mentioned in last year's report, and visited by the Hon. the Minister in April, 1886, but the old Greymouth-Wallsend Coal-mining Company's shaft, which Mr. Kilgour has leased from the West-port Coal Company. Mr. Kilgour having, in December, written asking for exemption from the clauses of the new Act relating to safety-cages and detaching-hooks, I forwarded his letter to the head office, and on the 22nd December received a reply that they need not be fitted so long as no men were raised or lowered. This is a very satisfactory decision, for there are several mines where the use of these appliances would not be at all instrumental in saving life, and where their adoption would be a very heavy tax on the proprietors.

22. *Wallsend Colliery, Greymouth.*—It is a pity that one accident should have marred the record of operations at this mine, the cleaning-out of the old shaft and sinking of the new one having been, with that exception, carried out with perfect safety. As it was, the injuries were slight, Charles Clifford, a sinker, being injured on the 12th June, by a fall of stone from the side of the shaft, sufficiently to keep him off work for twenty-three days. On the 27th September, 1886, I examined the whole of the workings without finding any gas. Very little work had, at that time, been done since the new shaft was sunk, though chocks and props had been plentifully set, and the pit bottom, which was a bord in the old workings, strongly arched with concrete. At this time the ventilative-power was the old 15ft.-fan, which was not running up to its full speed. Everything about the place seemed to be laid out with the greatest possible regard for safety, and safety-lamps are used in the workings. On the 7th and 10th December I again inspected. A good deal of gas appeared to be given off, but the brattice was kept well up, and no explosive mixture apparently lodged in the bords or headings. A register of boys was kept. Signal-notices were exhibited, and the cage fitted with a proper cover, but the arrangement for opening it from the inside seemed somewhat imperfect: this, however, Mr. Elliott arranged to alter. After many years' struggles this property is now in a fair way to commence putting out coal: with a plant probably unsurpassed south of the line, a splendid seam of good coal, and a rapidly-improving port the prospects should be good. The pit bank is covered in; and Mr. Waters, the company's engineer, has laid out the workings on a plan which, if carried out, will prevent the enormous loss of coal which has too frequently, in past years and in other mines, been caused by defective working.

23. *Springfield Colliery, Springfield.*—During the latter part of 1886 this mine was examined, on the 23rd July and 24th September. On the former occasion I made a thorough examination of the working places, and found everything in a satisfactory condition: the reports kept, and the air good. A new drive had been commenced between Ball's drive and the old engine places, for the purpose of extracting a pillar supposed to exist; but it did not last long. On the latter occasion I merely examined the head-gear and pit top, with a view to arranging how the safety-cages and hooks could be best erected. There is only 5ft. 6in. between the top of the rope-cap and the point of contact between the rope and pulley when the cage is raised off the kips, and the head-gear itself is by no means too strong for the present load. Mr. Lindop has worked the mine without accident, and, so far as I am aware, has observed the law in every particular.

24. *Zealandia Coal-mine, Springfield.*—On the 13th January, 1886, I visited this mine, which now appears for the first time on the list. At that time it had been working for about six months, but some years ago operations were carried on to a small extent. The seam is 2ft. 4in. of good coal, and the ground wrought is very limited in extent. The mine is now closed, and I have been unable to obtain any record of output. In April, 1886, Mr. G. Rutherford, owner of an adjoining property, wrote informing me that, in his opinion, the workings of this mine were encroaching on his property, and asking what he should do. Of course under "The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874," such matters were not within my duties, and an answer in accordance with this was sent. Under "The Coal Mines Act, 1886," the course is quite plain, and there is no doubt that the clause will materially simplify difficulties of this nature.

25. *Canterbury Colliery, Sheffield.*—Visited 30th July and 24th October, 1886. On the former occasion the works appeared in good order, and the report was kept; on the latter date, however, the air was very bad, and I had to request Mr. Austin to draw an air-way, which has since been done. The workings on the level are becoming exhausted, and Mr. Austin proposes putting down an engine plane, with proper machinery, and working the seam to the dip.

26. *Baron's Coal-mine, Sheffield.*—Ceased working on the 24th July, 1886.

27. *Homebush Coal-mine, Glentunnel.*—The output from this mine during last year was very small, only about six men being employed, who put out 1,929 tons, or 5,266 tons less than during the previous year. The workings have been inspected twice during 1886, since the date of my last report, on both of which occasions the Act appeared to be pretty well observed. The far rise workings are being pushed on, and will communicate with the surface.

28. *Dalethorpe Coal-mine, Springfield,* is a small undertaking on Mr. Rutherford's ground, and employing two men, who work a seam dipping at 35°. The workings, which covered a very small area, were in good order.

29. *Hartley Colliery, Whitecliffs.*—Last year's report described this place as being in bad order, and on the 29th July it was no better, being, in fact, nearly worked out. Mr. Ferguson, the