

Argyle Pit, Waikaia (J. B. Cosgrove, owner).—(23/4/97) : This is an opencast pit, about eight miles above the township. The lignite is about 10 ft. thick, overlaid by 3 ft. of stiff blue clay below the surface clay and soil. A fatal accident occurred here on the 6th April. The place is very roughly kept, but the man employed promised to put it into better shape. Wrote owner about it.

Sleeman's Waimumu Mine, Mataura.—(12/5/97) : The working-face having got below the level from which drainage could be economically effected, Mr. Sleeman has closed the pit he was recently working, and is at present drawing his supplies from a pit close by which he keeps as a reserve. He has recently bought another property, which will shortly be opened out. In the meantime he has preparations in progress for materially promoting efficiency and economy in working the new pit. To avoid the necessity for pumping, he is having a tunnel driven from the Mataura River. This will give free drainage to a considerable area of ground. The seam, which is identical with the others in the immediate locality, dips about 1 in 12. It will be worked opencast. A substantial loading-bank and depot are being constructed, also a tramway 45 chains in length to connect with the mine. Mr. Sleeman's works are very satisfactory; everything kept in first-class condition.

Bogside Mine, Mataura (H. Brown, lessee).—(12/5/97) : This mine is just commencing work. Same lignite as Beattie and Coster's. A small steam-boiler and Tangye duplex pump have been put down to keep the place drained.

Beattie and Coster's Lignite-mine, Mataura.—(12/5/97) : There is a thickness of 16 ft. of good solid lignite here, overlaid by 12 ft. of gravel and 2 ft. of soil, making a total stripping of 14 ft. These people work their pit very well, and keep a good area stripped. This enables them to keep their supply well up to meet demands. Drainage is by a centrifugal pump driven by a portable engine.

Graham's Pit, Fairfax (P. S. Graham).—(1/12/97) : Lignite-mine; entered by adit-levels. Seam nearly flat; capital roof. Places in capital order, and ventilation excellent. There is no scarcity of timber—in fact, more timber is used than there is any need for. Thickness of seam, 5 ft. 6 in.

Salton's Pit, Fairfax.—(1/12/97) : Mr. Salton is working a seam of lignite 5 ft. thick. The seam is very flat, and has a good roof. Workings are very limited, and in fair order.

Isla Bank Pit, Fairfax (M. Slattery).—(1/12/97) : A face of lignite 6 ft. thick is worked here. It is overlaid by 4 ft. of hard blue clay and 8 ft. or 9 ft. of surface clay, which are kept well stripped, but, considering the depth of stripping in relation to the thickness of seam, I think underground mining would be preferable.

Nightcaps Coal Company's Colliery, Nightcaps.—(11/6/97) : The operations here are in two sections—viz., the dip-workings adjoining Reed's mine and the level-tunnel workings. In the former the coal is about 10 ft. thick. It is very jointy, and needs careful working. The timbering and general arrangements for safety appear to have careful attention. The level-tunnel workings command three distinct seams, having an aggregate thickness of coal of some 36 ft. to 38 ft. The coal is very tough, requiring to be well holed before blasting. Timbering is well attended to, and good heavy timber used. To increase the ventilation (which I found very satisfactory) a new furnace has been built, and the flue arched in brickwork to the upcast shaft. The screens and loading-bank have recently been roofed over.

Reed's Morley Pit, Nightcaps.—(11/6/97) : This is an opencast pit. The coal is identical with that worked to the dip by the Nightcaps Coal Company, and is here overlaid by about 4 ft. of stripping. The place is in very fair order. At present time coal is being taken from part of a county road, the ground to be made good afterwards. Traffic on this piece of road is nil.

Alley's Pit, Nightcaps.—(14/7/97) : This is an opencast pit, but, owing to there being no proper road to it, work cannot be carried on during the winter. It is worked during part of the summer months, principally supplying the local farmers with coal for the threshing season. At present the pit is nearly full of water, and Alley is employed at Morley Pit.

Slaughter-yards, Mataura.—(12/5/97) : The Southland Frozen Meat and Produce Export Company (Limited) have opened out some lignite at their slaughter-yards, principally for their own use as fuel for the digestors, &c., used in tallow-melting, &c. The pit is an open quarry.

Hyde Lignite-pit.—(21/8/97) : A small mine was opened here by Mr. W. Lindsay, but the quality is so very poor that he gave it up. The tunnel-entrance was properly fenced off by a substantial gate, which was locked. I obtained the key, and looked inside. Very little work has been done. A few bags of coal are occasionally taken out for use at cottages close by. No returns have been made.

Orepuki.—(3/9/97) : The coal- and shale-mine is completely at a standstill, the plant at the shaft dismantled, and the dip-drive full of water. The place is, I understand, under offer to a syndicate. It is thought the shale might be profitably used for the manufacture of oil and other products.

ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES.

Argyle Pit, Waikaia.—William Bemrose, forty-three years of age, was working at the coal on the 6th April. A piece of stripping fell over the coal where he was working, knocking him down, and rupturing the bladder. He died on the way home. This was his first day at this mine, and he had only changed places with his mate a few minutes previous to the accident.

Cromwell Colliery, Cromwell.—William Grant Stronach, engineman, was in charge of repairs to pumps on Sunday, the 9th May. The column-pipes were being lowered after some repairs about the working-barrel, their weight being carried partly by the winding-rope and partly by another wire rope attached to beams at the surface, the surplus portion of this rope being coiled up near one of the main legs of the head-gear. Unfortunately, the winding-drum had been thrown out of gear with the engine. Stronach was standing with one foot inside the rope-coil referred to, directing operations, when the lashings gave way, and the pipes fell down the pit, taking a portion of both ropes with them. Stronach's foot was cut clean off by the violent shock of the rope against