

Levick's Coal-mine, Whitecliffs.—(4/8/99): The workings are entered by three adit-tunnels, and the pillars are now being worked back. Mr. Levick is a careful man, and spares neither expense nor trouble to keep things safe. Requirements of the Act are well complied with.

At Brockley a little more prospecting has been done, but, with the exception of a few odd loads of coal, the output is yet practically nil.

The Wairiri Mine has been closed.

Leeming's Hartley Mine, near Whitecliffs, has been taken up by a Christchurch company (the Hartley Colliery Syndicate), and when I was in the locality a new dip-tunnel was being driven.

At Mount Somers Coal-mine Mr. Park continues to work his large seam of coal opencast.

Mr. W. Young has disposed of his lease of the Albury Coal-mine to Mr. Willetts, who is now working the pit.

North Otago.

St. Andrew's Coal-mine, Papakaio (T. Nimmo).—(27/9/99): This mine is kept in excellent order, and every care appears to be taken to insure safety, and to work the coal with a minimum amount of loss. Act generally well complied with.

Prince Alfred Coal-mine, Papakaio (J. Willetts).—(27/9/99): All coal is now being got at the new opening referred to in my last report. The coal is very patchy, and this causes the style of work to be very irregular, and often necessitates fairly close timbering. Air very good, and plan up to date.

Ngapara Lignite-mine, Ngapara (W. Nimmo).—(8/11/99): Found all workings, ventilation, &c., in very satisfactory condition.

Shag Point Colliery, Shag Point (T. Shore, manager).—(20/4/99): The cross-measures level tunnel which was driven from the shaft from below No. 5 seam has been continued to the dip (seaward), and struck the No. 1 seam, which was formerly worked from the shaft at a higher level. This seam, so far as proved at the low level, averages 5 ft. 6 in. thick, but a few feet above it there is another seam about 4 ft. thick, with a band of stone in it. I think it very possible that what appears here in two seams is really the No. 1 seam divided. This part of the mine is submarine. The amount of cover where the seam is cut will be upwards of 320 ft. As the old workings in the same seam contain water, I arranged with the management for a barrier pillar of 2½ chains to be left between the new workings from this tunnel and the old workings, for the protection of the former. The code of signals for use in the shaft not being posted up in their proper places, and the flanges of the winding-drum being, in my opinion, somewhat deficient, I wrote the manager thereon on the 22nd April, 1899. I understand the requirements were complied with. (28/9/99): No. 1 seam (at end of long tunnel) continues very variable in thickness and quality. From present appearances it looks as though the area available may be limited in extent. No. 5 seam is practically exhausted on the south-east side of shaft, but to the north-west the strata separating it from a small overlying seam has thinned out, so that the two appear as one good seam, with No. 4 seam for a roof in places, the strata below No. 4 seam having also thinned out. This latter seam, although of fair thickness, is too stony to be of commercial value. Plans are kept up to date, and the mine well looked after.

Allandale Colliery, Shag Point (A. Gillanders, manager).—(19/4/99): Continued work in the seam proves that the coal is still variable in thickness, the minimum, so far as yet seen, being 3 ft. 6 in., and the maximum thickness 8 ft. Taken as a whole, the roof is rather bad, and the coalfield disturbed by numerous small faults. In the new mine the solid workings are approaching the old mine-workings, where the coal is still standing in pillars. The ventilation is very fair. The attention of the manager was drawn to some minor matters in connection with the working of the mine verbally, and also by letter under date of the 22nd April, 1899. A fatal accident occurred at this mine on the 13th April, 1899, the particulars of which will appear under the head of "Accidents." (26/9/99): There is now a considerable area of ground opened out, and the work of extracting the pillars near the rise of the field has commenced. A cross-measures tunnel, driven from the bottom level, has cut an underlying seam 4 ft. 6 in. thick, so far as proved. This seam is from 30 ft. to 40 ft. (vertical) below that hitherto worked, and as yet very little has been done in it. Ventilation very fair on the whole, although near the old workings the air was slightly charged with black-damp. This was perhaps all the more noticeable on this date in consequence of the ordinary work of the pit being suspended for the day owing to falling-off of demand, and advantage being taken of this to effect needed overhauls to the pumping plant. The steam was necessarily cut off, and as the ventilating-power is largely augmented by the heat from steam-pipes the decreased ventilation for the time being is easily understood. Mr. Gillanders subsequently informed me that he had improved the ventilation generally throughout the mine.

South Otago.

Walton Park Colliery (J. Kenyon, manager).—(5/1/99 and 27/1/99): On these dates I visited the colliery for the purpose of making a survey of the workings in relation to the ground agreed to be left for the protection of the Walton Park Branch Railway. Ventilation and general requirements appear well attended to. (23/6/99): Inspected the whole of the workings, which are now at some distance from the railway reserve. Owing to underground fires on the south side (to which—under the conditions of work—this mine is peculiarly liable) the pillars are now being worked out on the north side. Many of the old places were originally driven in the upper part of the seam, from 4 ft. to 7 ft. being left underfoot. Falls of roof have in many places covered what is perhaps the best portion of the seam, and the removal of this *débris* is somewhat expensive. It is quite safe to state that had this colliery been opened out in a proper systematic manner in the first instance, and continued to be worked under similar conditions, it would have been the model colliery of Otago, and could have been worked at a steady profit. The hand-to-mouth system upon which the colliery was opened has been responsible for the irrecoverable loss of scores of thousands of tons of coal.