

SOUTH OTAGO.

Fernhill Coal Company, Abbotsford (James Gray, manager and owner).—(10/2/1905): Fire-stoppings on the line of old workings are maintained in good order. Advancing places are being driven narrow underneath the Silverstream Water-race and immediate neighbourhood. There is evidence of movement on a fault-line in several of the places as though further displacement were taking place. A very fine deposit of building-sand, which is worked for use in Dunedin and surrounding districts, occurs in this property.

Freeman's Coal Company, Abbotsford (R. Hill, mine-manager).—(10/2/1905): All plant is now removed to the new drive at Fernhill Railway-yard where coal output is delivered into railway-trucks, and the surface tramway for haulage to siding on main south line of railway is now discontinued. Air satisfactory, and working-places in good order. I observed several places where faults or "lipes" in the roof crossed roadways. At my request the manager promised to set timber to the roof at these places for protection and safety of workmen. (5/12/1905): Air at intake 12,187·5 cubic feet per minute. Working-places clean and generally well ventilated; the tendency, however, exists of allowing bords to be overdriven before connecting for air-circulation. Dip places driven narrow owing to proud nature of roof, which will not stand bord width. Numerous thread-faults are also troublesome.

Walton Park Colliery, Walton Park (abandoned).—(18/10/1905): At the request of the District Railway Engineer I examined the surface "plump" on the Saddle Hill branch line of railway. According to the plans of the colliery the plump appears to be on a siding off the underground haulage-road where the roadway would no doubt be wide, and roof having fallen had reached the surface. By attention to depressions and filling of material, solidity will gradually be restored. The surface fires, referred to in my last annual report, are gradually waning and dying out. The only work now being done on the property is production of a fine quality of building-sand, which outcrops in the measures overlying the coal-seams.

Jubilee Colliery, Saddle Hill (Peter Campbell, mine-manager; Loudon and Howorth, owners).—(29/6/1905): Roadways and working-places in good order, and ventilation satisfactory. The coal is naturally strong, and working-places are driven wide and high with safety, a minimum quantity of timber being necessary for securing the workmen from accident; falls from roof or side being of rare occurrence. (18/10/1905): Ventilation decidedly weak, and air consequently dull at a number of the working-faces, aggravated by shot-firing, which had occurred prior to my visit, in apparent disregard of the manager's notification posted in the mine that shooting was only allowed at "knock-off" each day. I also found that proper canisters were not in use for safe carriage of compressed powder, a source of danger, as naked lights are in use in the mine. (20/12/1905): On this occasion I found the ventilation good, blasting prohibited except at end of day's work, and proper powder-canisters are in course of construction. A new upcast air-shaft being sunk to the rise of the workings will solve the ventilation problem.

Burnweil Colliery, Saddle Hill (Adam Harris, owner and manager).—(17/2/1905): This visit was paid by request of Mr. Harris, who reported an accumulation of water in his mine as being likely to endanger his neighbours, Messrs. Christie Bros., whose workings were advancing in the direction of Mr. Harris's property. I examined both mines and conferred with Messrs. Christie and Harris, who were very reasonable in the matter, the consequence being that an ample barrier of solid coal is being left for protection of workmen and safety of property from water and fire. Some trouble is being experienced with the old fire, but a double row of stoppings is keeping it in check. Accumulation of water in dip is softening the bottom, and pillars are consequently sinking to a considerable extent, the effect being visible on the surface.

Glenochiel Colliery, Saddle Hill (A. Harris, owner and manager; late D. Bryce).—(20/12/1905): Very little work has been done here during the year. Mr. Bryce notified me, under date the 4th October, that he had disposed of his interest in the property to Mr. A. Harris, of the Burnweil Colliery. Mr. Harris is engaged driving a tunnel in this property to effect a convenient inlet to the Burnweil portion of the seam.

Saddle Hill No. 1 Colliery, Saddle Hill (Christie Bros., owners; W. W. Ogilvie, manager).—(17/2/1905): I examined the section of work known as McIntyre's, also the westerly workings advancing in the direction of Harris's Burnweil Colliery. The further places showed signs of dampness, also several small streams of water trickling from the faces. The manager stated that two months ago these faces were dry, and added that they were still one chain from Harris's boundary, which the plan showed they were. (20/12/1905): McIntyre's area now driven to boundary may come back on splitting pillars. Water from Harris's workings percolating freely through joints of coal, but no apprehension need be felt, as in addition to the safety barrier it has been observed that water in Harris's mine rises and falls in sympathy with Christie's. Principal work comprises dropping head-coal and splitting pillars in rise-workings. Ventilation fair. Mr. Christie proposes to proceed with erection of brick furnace to upcast shaft. Plan and report-book to date.

Saddle Hill No. 2 Colliery, Saddle Hill (Christie Bros., owners; James C. Christie, manager).—(29/6/1905): Operations confined to extraction of pillars to boundary, and robbing of roof in isolated sections as prepared beforehand; a row of stoppings is inserted as each section becomes exhausted in order to retain black damp and minimise risk of fire from spontaneous ignition. Roadways and working-places in good order, and ventilation good. (18/10/1905): Seam 25 ft. in thickness, of which it is estimated some 80 per cent. is being recovered. The roof behind is settling nicely, and timber is used as required for protection of the men. Air warm in far-in pillar-places, and the current generally was not up to the usual mark. (20/12/1905): I found good ventilation throughout the mine, pillar-rob and robbing being successfully conducted as heretofore. Rules posted; plan kept; and report-book to date.