

Blackball Colliery.—On the 18th June a serious fire occurred close to the main haulage-road at a stopping in No. 7 bank. A detailed report regarding this occurrence has been forwarded.

Millerton Colliery.—On the 27th August a spontaneous fire was discovered in the 6th West pillars section in the Mine Creek area. The outbreak was speedily and successfully dealt with by cutting off the air-supply. Since the completion of the air-stoppings no further trouble from this source has been encountered.

Coalbrookdale Colliery.—On the 13th December a fire was discovered by the examining deputy on his rounds in the No. 8 Cascade section. After a couple of hours strenuous work by several of the employees the fire was extinguished. It is surmised to have had its origin in a spark from a miner's oil-lamp, the spark falling amongst and kindling old timber and rubbish.

Ventilation.—At all the larger mines efficient mechanical appliances (fans) are employed to produce ventilation; and, generally speaking, the working-places throughout the mines have been found, when inspected, to be in a satisfactory condition. Whenever samples of the air have been taken in any place they have upon analysis been found to be of good quality.

Coaldust.—More attention than formerly has been given to coaldust, and managers have been urged to thoroughly damp and keep the roadways as clean as practicable from small coal in order to more thoroughly minimize the dangers from this source. Instructions have been given to managers to discontinue non-permitted and use only permitted explosives.

Falls of Roof and Sides.—There has been only one fatality under this head during the year. This is undoubtedly an improvement compared with previous years, and can, I think, be apportioned mostly to better attention being given to systematic timbering. There is, however, still room for improvement, and in order to bring this about it is necessary that officials and workmen should keenly appreciate the danger from falls from roof and sides, and should, by careful and frequent examination, endeavour to safeguard against such occurrences. I am strongly of the opinion that a very large proportion of the accidents that occur under the above heading would be prevented if ordinary precaution and a little common-sense were displayed.

SOUTHERN INSPECTION DISTRICT. (Mr. E. R. GREEN, Inspector.)

Sheffield Coal-mine, Sheffield.—Prospecting for coal; shaft down 100 ft., following a bore-hole, where 5 ft. seam had been passed through at 120 ft.

Bush Gully Coal-mine, Coalgate.—Drawing pillars on south side of crosscut dip, and now at No. 4 level, 200 ft. from surface. Supports were being left to the pair of dip drives, so that any future mining may be conducted in that direction.

Homebush Coal-mine, Glentunnel.—Driving to dip in the old engine seam and levels off the same are being broken away north and south. The mine had been closed down, and is only in the re-prospecting stage.

St. Helens Coal-mine, Whitecliffs.—The mine last seen had been abandoned as worked out, and a new mine to the dip has been driven in a spur where there remained some unworked coal.

Tripp's Coal-mine, Mount Somers.—Mine in fairly good order. The pillars towards the outcrop are being well drawn; second outlet is to be further improved for travelling and airway.

Woolmer's Coal-mine, Mount Somers (George Bland).—Tram laid, grade 1 in 3, 1,500 ft. in length, to the foot of the hill, thence transport by drays to the Selwyn tram-line, distance about one mile.

Albury Coal-mine, Albury.—Mine in good order, and ventilation good. A new air-shaft had been sunk ahead of the advancing workings, thereby providing direct air-circulation.

Allanholme Coal-mine, Waihao.—A good seam of hard lignite which had the appearance of being fairly extensive, with improvement to the dip. Ventilation good.

St. Andrew's Coal-mine, Papakaio.—Extraction of pillar coal practically finished. Another opening will soon be required if the output is to be maintained.

Prince Alfred Coal-mine, Papakaio.—Robbing dip pillars and head coal. Ventilation good. Report-book kept.

Ngapara Coal-mine, Ngapara.—Ventilation good. Advancing in solid coal on the freehold towards the boundary of the adjoining Crown land, the surface of which is leased by Mr. Nimmo.

Shag Point Coal-mine, Shag Point.—The return airway had recently been restored. Ventilation is generally good. These workings were conducted in an upper seam, 3 ft. to 4 ft., overlying the original main-seam workings in old Shag Point Colliery.

Shag Point Coal Proprietary Mine, Shag Point.—Workings well timbered. Ventilation not quite satisfactory in distant places, chiefly on account of the small furnace in use being inadequate to remove powder-smoke.

McPherson's Coal-mine, Coal Creek Flat.—Opencast working. The low-level drain for unwatering the pit was progressing slowly, water for sluicing the overburden being only available on Sundays when not required by the gold-miners. The fire on the hill-face in the upper and inferior seams is well kept under by water and smothered with clay from above.

Perseverance Coal-pit, Coal Creek Flat.—Suspended. This pit had stood idle throughout the winter owing to the difficulties of mining in the vicinity of the creek.

Alexandra Coal-mine, Alexandra.—Workings in good order, and ventilation satisfactory. Roof tender at far-in places, necessitating timbering, although driven narrow.

St. Bathans's Coal-mine, St. Bathans's.—Pit flooded with water and face mostly smothered with fallen overburden. Output small.

Rough-ridge Coal-mine, Oturukua.—Water in pit and face encountered with winter waste from overburden.