

Homebush Colliery, Malvern.—The workings of this mine are still continued to the rise, and of course as they progress become more and more difficult to ventilate. The places are driven too far without crosscuts, and as pointed out last year, the air is at times very foul. The headings are also in some cases too wide.

Springfield Colliery, Malvern.—The engine plane has been continued for some distance since I visited the mine last year; but when Mr. Binns visited the mine he was unable to go down to the end in consequence of the water. The ventilation was also very bad, but it appeared afterwards that the door of communication with the outer air near the furnace was open, which would fully account for this. With reference to the accident which occurred here on the 1st January, the following appears to have been the cause.

The place where the man was hurt is at the junction of two cross roads with the engine plane, and these being opposite to one another necessarily weaken the place.

The empty set going down got off the rails and knocked out three props and bars, and in replacing these some twenty hours later, a lump of stone from the roof fell upon the man and knocked him down. He does not appear to have been very badly hurt.

Fernhill Colliery, Green Island.—This colliery which has recently been opened, is situated about a mile to the south of Freeman's. The coal is of the same quality as the Green Island coal generally, but having good facings, is more easily got. The underground manager, Mr. Shaw, appears to have laid out his workings well, and by the terms of the lease the lessees are bound to keep a plan of their workings. An aerial wire tramway has been constructed, of about a mile in length, to bring the coal from the mine to the railway, and this appears to work satisfactorily. It is capable of carrying 200 tons per day.

Otago Colliery, Green Island.—This colliery was again on fire when visited, having broken out afresh.

Freeman's Colliery, Green Island.—The dip drive has been continued since my last report, and several new places opened out, but the pillars still appear to be small. The air works satisfactorily, and the places which were stopped off do not seem to have fired. The mouth of the drive appears somewhat insecure, but Mr. Freeman intends to take down the loose stuff and make it better.

Saddle Hill Colliery, Green Island.—Very little work has been done here since Mr. Denniston's last survey, but the proprietors, Messrs. Christie Bros., have been driving through the pillars. The mine is now in a precarious state, large quantities of slack lying about in the mine, which will probably fire should a fall of the roof take place, as it is already very hot. The ventilation is fairly satisfactory, but its efficiency might be increased.

Green Island Colliery, Samson's—This colliery is in good order, and the ventilation all that can be desired. The working faces are now being extended to the S.W. side of the pit.

Walton Park Colliery, Green Island.—The workings are now being continued to the N.E. of the shaft, beneath the incline plane, and are in good order.

The new shaft, mentioned in my last year's report, has now reached a depth of 175 feet, and has passed through 19 feet of coal, the seam not having as yet been bottomed. In sinking this shaft a great deal of water has been met with, and at one time the pump, which is a single acting lift-pump, was raising 216 gallons of water per minute. At present the amount does not exceed 84 gallons. The ventilation is satisfactory, and the doors and stoppings are in good repair.

The cage is without a cover, and although a means of signalling exists from the bottom of the shaft to the surface, no provision has been made for sending messages down the shaft.

Shore's No. 1 Kaitangata, Otago.—The new shaft mentioned in my last year's report has now reached a depth of 392 feet, and a stone drift to the east has struck coal at 249 feet from the shaft, the full thickness of which was not proved when the mine was visited. There is a considerable quantity of water which is drawn by a bucket in the downcast divisions of the shaft, whilst a cage is in the upcast.

Mr. Binns has reported the occurrence of gas in this pit, and states that the two Geordie lamps in the possession of the company have both cracked glasses. The cage has no cover, and the 4-inch flat wire rope used for winding is very rusty. A stage has been erected at the pit mouth and substantial screens put up, the coal passing over $\frac{3}{4}$ inch bars.

Several men have been burnt by fire-damp in this pit, of which the following instance may be cited, the details having been furnished by the sufferer:—

On or about November 9th, Stephen Bailey, who had been working about three months in the pit, was engaged in letting off some water which had been dammed up in the stone drift by a fall of the roof. He was working with a naked light, and not being a practised collier could not be expected to understand where danger existed. The gas fired at his naked light, and he was laid up for three weeks. Mr. Shore blames Bailey, and says that he ordered him to come away.

Kaitangata Railway and Coal Mining Company, Otago.—A disastrous explosion took place at this mine on the 21st February, killing all the men who were in the mine at the time.

The immediate cause of the explosion appears to have been that A. Hodge, one of the men employed at the mine, went into the wastes with a naked light in search of a rail, and that the gas which had accumulated there, fired at his lamp.

Since my report on this mine last year the workings had been extended to the rise of the coal, and the old workings abandoned, but not closed. The air was let in by the main tunnel up to the new workings, and from there taken by a small airway to the old workings, or wastes, through which it was allowed to spread on its way back to the ventilating shaft near the mouth of the mine; but no care was taken to conduct the air to the faces, or to ventilate the high chambers made by the system on which the coal was won.

Mr. Binns made a careful examination of this mine on the 24th January last, when he arrived at the conclusion that the mine was very dangerous, in consequence of the imperfect ventilation of the wastes, and he then informed the manager, Mr. W. Hodge, of his opinion on the subject.