

was carefully observed. The ventilation is very good, and the mine is examined before each shift goes to work. The coal will have to be worked by stoping between the different levels, as in a quartz reef, and if carried on in a judicious manner can be worked in perfect safety, and Mr. Renfrew, the manager, appears to understand the system which he intends to pursue. With regard to the accident to Marbella, I find that he has left the mine, as also has the manager who reported it, so that very little information can be obtained. However, the men all go to and from their work by the ladders now, and will continue to do so until the cages, which are on the ground, are fitted.

*Wallsend Colliery, Collingwood.*—I visited this mine on the 18th February, and found the works generally standing well and in good order. The system employed is a variety of long-wall, but, instead of allowing the roof to settle down from the first, it is supported for some distance back from the face, in order to throw the weight on the face and facilitate the workings. I pointed out to both Mr. Rees and Mr. Walker that if this course were followed a time must come at which the roof would break over the coal; but, as this is certain to give warning by crushing the props near the face, I have contented myself with an assurance that, should this ensue, they will either ease the pressure by drawing timber, or abandon the face where the crush has come on.

*Westport Colliery Company (Banbury Mine).*—I visited this mine on the 28th February, and found everything going on satisfactorily. Since my last visit great changes have been effected in the working appliances of the mine. The self-acting incline has been greatly improved on the top lift, the trucks being now completely under control, the speed of transit having at the same time been considerably reduced. The lower incline is still worked under a disadvantage, owing to the inconvenience of the hydraulic brake which is employed; but, even with this, as much as 496 tons of coal has been lowered during an eight-hour shift. The arrangements for haulage on the top of the incline have also been greatly improved, an endless chain having been substituted for the ponies which formerly did the work, with the result, I am informed, of a great economy on the cost of haulage. This endless-chain system it is proposed eventually to continue as far as the thick coal in Coalbrook Dale, and in the course of six weeks from the date of my visit it was hoped that operations would be commenced in the 12ft. seam of coal, which is a continuation of that exposed in Burnett's face. A furnace has now been erected to the rise of the workings, so that a constant ventilation is now insured. The accident which occurred lately on the incline, by which one man lost his life and another suffered severe injuries, appears to have been due to the breaking of a coupling on the railway truck. The men were riding in the truck, in defiance of a rule posted forbidding it; but, at the same time the danger of travelling the incline on foot is considerable, and some provision should be made for access to Denniston without using the incline at all. The question whether the formation of the required track is a duty of the company, or whether it devolves upon the County Council is in dispute, but whoever does it the track is urgently required.

*Brunner Colliery.*—I visited this mine on the 3rd March and examined all the workings, finding that everything was safe and in good order. The most important works are now to the dip, where the coal is thick, and of first-rate quality; but the rise-workings have also been pushed forward during the past year, and a considerable quantity of coal extracted, which is, however, of a more tender character than that from the dip. The system of haulage has been greatly improved since my last visit, and the erection of the fan has given a constant and reliable current of air. A drive has been put through the fault to the rise proving the coal beyond it where the throw is but small, and the work of proving the coal beyond the fault further to the dip is to be continued at once. All the requirements of the Act appear to be observed, and, although a little gas is seen from time to time, no accumulation whatever has as yet occurred, and every care is exercised to prevent accidents. The use of safety-lamps to the rise has been discontinued since the blower mentioned in my last year's report was passed, and at the present time but little gas is given off from it.

*Coalpit-Heath Colliery.*—This mine was visited on the 3rd March, and is in much better order than when I last inspected the workings. The winding machinery has been erected to haul from the dip-workings, and by means of two ropes, one down the main incline and the other down what was formerly the horse-road, the whole of the dip coal is brought to the main level, whence it is drawn by horses to the bottom of the shaft. The present arrangement of the workings allows of a much better system of ventilation than formerly, but still, although there is a strong current of air passing through the mine, the ventilation is not as perfect as it might be at some of the places to the dip. This is probably due to inefficient stoppings at places, and Mr. Alexander has promised to pay particular attention to this. There is still a little gas found in the mine from time to time, but it is soon cleared out when the furnace is in full work, and Mr. Alexander proposes to increase the height of the air-shaft, so as to insure a more perfect current of air and entirely prevent baffling, which should greatly improve the ventilation. I was not aware at the time of my visit that Mr. Binns had several times lately had to find fault with the ventilation, and so took Mr. Alexander's promise to improve it as likely to be carried out. As, however, he appears to have previously neglected the injunctions of the Inspector, it will be necessary, as Mr. Binns suggests, to take steps to enforce compliance with the Act.

*Shag Point Colliery.*—I visited this mine on the 17th March, and found that, in accordance with a notice from Mr. Binns, the whole of the workings had been abandoned and the shaft allowed to fill with water.

*Abbotsroyd Colliery.*—I inspected this mine on the 19th March, finding that the works generally were safe, but, as of late several of the old workings have been reopened and the coal is being got through some of these, the mine does not present the appearance of a well-worked colliery. At the present time a drive is being put in to cut yet another of the old workings, in which a certain amount of standing water is expected to be found. A single borehole was kept ahead in this drive, and I required Mr. Walker to also keep flank boreholes ahead, in compliance with the Act.

*Fernhill Colliery.*—This mine, which I inspected on the 19th March, was generally in good order, and a fair output of coal is being maintained. A large furnace has been erected for ventilating purposes, which should be far more than sufficient to supply good air throughout the mine; but,