

Fairfax, Fairfax, Todd and Graham (8th October).—Since my previous visit the stripping has been discontinued, and two levels have been driven from the open face, taking out 5ft. 8in. of coal in height. These levels are being continued parallel for a considerable distance in the coal, leaving a pillar between of 15ft. thick. I have instructed them to drive an airway through this pillar where they are now working, and to sink an up-cast shaft, convenient to the open face, and place a furnace therein. They have agreed to do this work at an early date. The mine is secured in a very substantial manner by strong timbers, well fitted.

Isla Bank, Fairfax (8th October).—This is still being worked as an open face, though the stripping is getting very heavy. The stripping face is good standing ground that will be quite safe with a small batter.

Orepuki Coal-mine (16th September, 1891).—Mr. Cassels has opened a mine in another place since my previous visit, and is now following the dip of the seam to the eastward. The dip-drive is the only work at present in hand, and the present intention is to extend this some distance in the hope of finding a change in the dip for the better working of same. Mr. Love, the manager, informed me that he had passed through some ground that was very loose overhead, and that it ran considerably. This part is now closely timbered overhead with caps, each resting on a set of legs. The coal-seam appears to have been very much disturbed where the extra timber is placed. There are only three men employed at present. The mine rules are posted up at the pit-mouth. I examined the covering of the original shaft, and found it in a safe condition.

Popham's Coal-mine, Orepuki (16th September, 1891).—I found Mr. Popham with a surveyor laying off a tramway-line from his mine to where he could get a dray-road. When the tramway is completed, Mr. Popham will open a mine a short distance from the Waimeamea Creek and north from the old working-face. I learn that very little coal has been hewn during the last twelve months.

Kowai Pass Coal-mine (8th March).—This is an old mine reopened eight to ten months ago by two miners named Smith and Taylor. The seam is thin, with an 18in. band in the centre. It is worked by an adit. These men knew nothing of the Coal-mines Act of 1891 till I spoke to them about it. They promised to get a copy, and attend to clause 68.

Edendale Coal-mine, McDonald's Pit (6th August, 1891).—This mine is only being opened, scarcely any coal having yet been removed. The seam is a little below the level of a small stream close by, and will therefore require pumping-plant to work the pit properly. The stripping is fine gravel and clay, from 4ft. to 6ft. deep. The road to the mine is through farming-land, and almost impassable.

Mount Linton Coal-mine (T. Knight, manager; 7th October).—This mine is ten or twelve miles west of Nightcaps mines. An open face, on face of a hill where mining on a small scale has been carried on for several years, but now abandoned. Mr. Knight has now opened a pit on a low-lying flat near the creek. The pit was filled with water at the time of my visit, and there was no one about the place. I saw a sample of the coal, which I think is superior to any at the Nightcaps mines.

ACCIDENTS.

I am pleased to have to report only one fatal accident during the year, which occurred at Jones's Lignite-mine at Coal Creek, Roxburgh, 20th July, when Thomas Low was killed. There were two accidents at Kaitangata Mine. On the 5th March Adam Duff got his leg broken by a fall of coal, and on the 30th June William Barlow was injured by a fall of coal. At Shag Point Mine, Thomas Young was injured slightly by getting his fingers jammed.

METHODS OF WORKING.

Worked by shafts—							
Steam-power used	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Horse-power used	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
							— 10
Worked by adit—							
Engine-plane	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
Horse-power	...	...	...	...	...	...	27
Hand-power	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
							— 60
Openwork	...	...	...	...	...	...	45
							— 115
New mine at Catlin's not stated	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
							— 116
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	116

I have, &c.,
J. Gow, Inspector of Mines.