

Coal Creek Lease.—The railway is still being gone on with, about three miles of the formation having been completed from a point about a third of a mile from Cobden Bridge, out towards the coalfield. A bridge is intended to be constructed over the Grey River. At present some of the small bridges are being built. Some little prospecting has been done, but no mining. The former ought to have had more attention paid to it, in order that the field should be opened at the proper place. At date of writing Mr. Bishop informs me that the work of prospecting is now being proceeded with, in which four men are employed. He also states that some £12,000 has been expended on labour and material.

ACCIDENTS.

The following accidents have been reported to me by the mine-managers during the year :—

1. 10th January.—Coalbrookdale: A miner named William Hedley was injured by a fall of timber, and died the same night. He had returned to his working-face after firing a shot, which in all probability loosened the set of timber, and the powder-smoke would prevent this being easily seen.

2. 24th February.—Coalbrookdale: A youth named Silvio Martini got his leg broken through the pin of a clip breaking and allowing the truck which he had just clipped on to run back on him. He died from the injuries the following day. Evidence was given at the inquest that the clip and pins had been examined.

3. 17th April.—Mokihinui: A miner named William Stirt sustained a fracture of the ribs by a fall of roof.

4. 12th May.—Ironbridge: A miner named Robert Gibson was killed by a fall of coal in pillar-working. There were some strong joints in the coal at the place, and it probably slipped on one of these as the timber was thrown out.

5. 24th May.—Blackball: A miner named Robert Greenshields had his arm dislocated at the shoulder by a fall of coal when holing. The coal had fallen out underneath the sprag.

6. 26th May.—Blackball: A miner named George Nuttall was struck on the eye by a piece of coal flying from his pick point.

SICK AND ACCIDENT FUNDS.

Contributions to the above funds are being paid by all the larger mines and by most of the smaller ones.

GENERAL.

The fatal accidents at Coalbrookdale, each of which was carefully investigated, and no breach of the law disclosed, having continued, and the workings having become more extensive and further apart, I thought it desirable under special rule 1 that there should be separate managers for Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge Mines, but Mr. Cameron did not seem to fall in with the idea. The question was subsequently gone into with Mr. Joachim, the general manager, who exhibited every anxiety to provide for the safety of the men.

Mr. Lindop has since been appointed next to Mr. Brown, with Mr. John Green mine-manager at Coalbrookdale, and Mr. N. Milligan mine-manager at Ironbridge Mines. Both the latter are experienced practical miners, who have passed the examination in the colony and gained first-class certificates.

Regarding the Brunner Mine, Mr. Bishop informs me on 9th April that 1ft. 6in. of coal is the thickness of the seam in the face of the prospecting-drive, so the thin coal must be of considerable extent.

I have, &c.,

E. D. COCHRANE,

Inspector of Mines.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

No. 4.

Mr. JOHN GOW, Inspector of Mines, to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES, Wellington.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 30th March, 1895.

I have the honour, in compliance with section 67 of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891," to report as follows, for the information of the Hon. the Minister of Mines:—

My remarks on the several mines in my district will be found to follow my list consecutively, commencing at—

CANTERBURY.

1. *Springfield Mine.*—(25/7/94): The seam, now 3ft. 6in. at the outcrop near the pottery-works, is still being worked almost exclusively for the use of these works. There are only two men hewing coal, and they are not employed full time. They were not working on the day of my visit. I found the top-heading fairly well timbered and the roof good, but the timber in the lower end of the dip-drive was considerably canted, and threatened a collapse. I gave instructions to the lessee to have this part at once put into a safe condition, or have the men withdrawn and allow it to close.

3. *Sheffield Mine.*—(25/6/94): The coal is now being hauled by a horse up the new tunnel on the upper side of the old shaft, from which it is a short distance away. The drainage from the new workings is allowed to flow into the old workings and to the shaft, which is not just now used in any way whatever. In consequence of a constant drainage coming into the mine from the hillside all the truck-roads are very dirty and sloppy underfoot. The coal-seam has still the 2ft. band of sand in the centre. The roof is remarkably even and smooth throughout the mine, and fairly well timbered. In the worked-out ground the centre band and other refuse are stowed away, which