

was injured on the head and face by a fall of coal coming over the sprag. Timbering and spragging are strictly attended to. Reports kept to date. Air-measurement, 17,500 cubic feet per minute. Air-current, direct. Electric light has been installed at the brake-head for screening and tipping purposes.

*Langford Coal-mine.*—This mine still continues to be shut down.

*Whitecliff Coal-mine.*—No further effort has been made to open this mine.

*Cocksparrow Coal-mine.*—(11/9/1900): This vertical seam varies in thickness from 1 ft. 6 in. to 2 ft., from which the Consolidated Gold-dredging Company was supplied with fuel.

*Coal Creek Coal-mine.*—This mine was idle the whole year. George Walker, of Rocklands, has taken up the lease with the object of supplying the Rocklands Gold-dredging Company with coal.

*Golden Treasure Coal-mine.*—(21/11/1900): On this leasehold coal for domestic purposes is practically exhausted. A considerable quantity of first-class steam-coal of easy access remains to be worked. The difficulty in Reefton is to find a suitable market.

*Murray Creek Coal-mine* (Lewis Betts, owner).—(21/11/1900): The open-face section of old pillar ground continues to supply a fair share of local trade as a first-class household fuel. Working-conditions afford no fresh subject-matter to report, as the crushed sandstone roof formation is sluiced away, and the coal picked and loaded.

*Phoenix Coal-mine* (John Fox, owner).—(21/11/1900): This leasehold contains two coal-seams; the top seam is 25 ft. and the bottom seam 22 ft. in thickness, separated by a dirt-band 6 ft. in thickness. For steaming and household purposes their qualities are identical, both seams being hard bright coals. Operations were formerly confined to the top seam, but during the past year the bottom seam was opened on the south outcrop by two parallel levels, which will command a better system of working. Screening and loading facilities are much improved on the new site. Eight men are employed.

*Lankey's Creek Coal-mine.*—(22/11/1900): William Lamberton works single-handed in a level drive located between a section of old rise workings and a dip fault-line. The coal in the present mine is nearly exhausted.

*Bourke's Creek Coal-mine.*—(21/11/1900): For general use this coal takes a leading place in the local market, prices being slightly easier owing to cartage facilities. The coal-supply is chiefly mined from a rise section, bounded westward by a fault-line, and southward by the outcrop. This section of working is practically exhausted, and unless the fault standing on the west adit-level face is cut future prospects are not encouraging. On a later visit the owner was plainly told his actual position, but the reply was "short of funds." Six men are employed. Reports kept to date.

*New Inkerman Coal-mine.*—(22/11/1900): The Inkerman Gold-mining Company continue to mine coal for steaming purposes at Rainy Creek low-level tunnel.

*Devil's Creek Coal-mine.*—This mine has been idle the whole year. The mine being on the Midland Railway Reserve, John MacQuilliam, the late owner, had not obtained proper title to the mineral, and in consequence the claim was "jumped."

*Breen's Coal-mine.*—(23/11/1900): This coal-seam intersects a small range on a vertical underlie, which is driven on by a single drive near the cap of the hill. The coal is of average quality for household purposes. Thickness, about 4 ft.; output for year, 60 tons.

*Progress New Mine* (the Progress Gold-mining Company).—(23/11/1900): The coal is exclusively used for steaming purposes at the Progress Quartz-mines. It is an average quality steam-coal, the seam being from 5 ft. to 6 ft. in thickness. Occasional displacements occur by the roof bending down to the floor, but difficulty is not experienced in winning the coal afresh. Three men are employed.

*Waitakere Coal-seam.*—The citizens of Charleston continue to enjoy their fireside comforts from this lignite-seam.

*Blackball Colliery* (owners, Blackball Coal Company).—(25/10/1900): The output from the mine being controlled by the limited carrying-capacity of the aerial tram-line, the increased demand on the colliery to meet trade exigencies necessitated double shift at the commencement of the year. Mining operations were successfully carried on until the 30th November, when a "gob-fire" (the result of spontaneous ignition) was discovered in the old workings. The furnaceman on duty, seeing the foul condition of the return air-current, made his exit through the mine to report the occurrence to the mine-manager, whom he met at the mine-entrance waiting to see the men at change of shift. The manager, knowing that G. H. Green (the relieving furnaceman) had passed to his work, gave immediate instructions to clear all hands out of the mine, and rescue parties were speedily formed to search for the missing man, but unfortunately without success. The position being serious, a powerful steam-jet was placed in the bottom of an unused upcast shaft near the mine-entrance, thus maintaining a strong reversed air-current, which enabled a rescue party on the 1st December to enter the mine by way of the furnace-drive and rescue the body of Green, where it had fallen a victim to the resultant gases. Further efforts to cope with the fire being impracticable, flooding was determined on, and a strong convex brick and cement dam was built in the rock adit. The water-supply being within easy access, it was conveyed over a flume-line 14 chains in length, 24 in. in width by 12 in. deep, and discharged direct into the mine at No. 13 incline, which tapped the outcrop. After a lapse of several weeks, drainage was effected by means of two built-in 8 in. pipes fitted with stop-valves, the mine being reopened for mining operations early in February. In view of opening out the coalfield to the dip-boundary, the main engine-road and all other permanent works are being made in the top seam underlying the strong sandstone formation, the top seam being tapped by a level rock crosscut driven west from a point on the main adit, about 50 yards from its junction with the bottom seam. During the year the aerial tram-line cables have been thoroughly renewed. Two miners named Harry Slade and Rodger Stephenson