

Homebush Fireclay.—Work at the clay-mine has been suspended and work confined to mining a limited quantity of clay from the surface.

Homebush Mine.—Coal-winning operations have continued to be merely collecting small blocks of coal which were left from the old workings, and, as a result, working-conditions have not been all that could be desired. A commencement has now been made to prospect the area lying to the dip of the old workings in the engine seam, and it is proposed to drive a dip stone-drive in a northerly direction at a grade of 1 in 3½ for this purpose.

Solitude Mine.—Work carried out here proved the seam to be one which could not be economically worked owing to its limited thickness—i.e., 3 ft.—and also owing to the fact that the roof conditions were particularly unfavourable.

Sheffield Mine.—This is a new mine commenced for the working of fireclay. The site of operations is adjacent to Austin's old clay-mine, a few miles from Sheffield. The seam of clay is 6 ft. thick, which is used chiefly for pipe-making.

Steventon Mine (Whitecliffs).—This is a new mine commenced with the object of working a seam of coal lying approximately 85 ft. below the seam worked in the old Steventon Mine. A dip heading has been driven south and levels broken away east and west. Present indications are that very little coal exists to the west and that the east levels will probably terminate at a gravel intrusion, which is showing in the two higher east levels at a point approximately 3 chains from the main dip. The coal is of lignite quality and approximately 6 ft. thick.

Sunnydale Mine (Mount Somers).—The year's work at this mine has consisted of prospecting with a view to finding the coal-seam at a lower level. However, it would appear that the chances of locating a seam of hard coal in this locality are very poor. A few small stumps of coal were extracted at the top of the hill, and a quantity of clay for pottery-ware was also won.

Blackburn Coal Co. (Mount Somers).—No development work has taken place at this mine, the year's output having been obtained from pillar-extraction.

Mount Somers Coal Co.—A small amount of development work was carried out from the new lower level and to the north. This area is now ready for pillar-extraction. Pillar-extraction has also continued to the east of the old level. A commencement has been made to intercept the seam at a lower level by means of a level stone-drive commenced on the flat adjacent to the loading bank.

Meadowbank Mine.—A limited amount of development work was carried out and the thickness and quality of lignite was maintained. However, the demand for this class of coal in this district was so small that operations were temporarily suspended in August.

Woodbank Mine, Albury.—A limited amount of development work has been continued to the north, but the demand for this lignite has not increased.

NORTH OTAGO DISTRICT.

Airedale Mine.—Development work was continued to the dip and chiefly to the south, and there now remains only a limited area undeveloped in the present lease. The quality of coal to the east and south was reasonably good, and its thickness maintained. A commencement was made towards the end of the year to split an area of pillars to the south. The mine has been connected to the district electrical-power supply, and this power is used for haulage, &c.

St. Andrew's Mine (Papakāio).—Development work has been suspended meantime, and the output is now being obtained from pillar-extraction. In the later stages of development the coal in the main level was faulted and friable. A process of retreating with the rise pillars will now be carried out.

Ngapara Mine.—Pillar-extraction has been continued intermittently during the year under reasonably favourable conditions.

Shag Point Coal-mining Co.—The year saw the termination of mining operations by this company. Towards the end of the year all available pillars had been extracted, and operations ceased in December. The struggle to continue economical coal-mining has been an uphill one, and, at times, coal was being worked not more than 2 ft. 6 in. thick. The pillars which were left to support the return airway will probably be won by a private individual who will employ a few men.

Shag Point Mine (Old Mine).—Development has continued to the dip and to the north and south. The north levels terminate on a fault, the throw of which was reported to have been proved, but this report turned out to be incorrect. The dip and south levels are approaching the ocean high-water mark, and will be limited by same. The seam has maintained its thickness.

Willett's Mine (Papakāio).—Development has continued to the north, south, and west, but indications are that the seam becomes interstratified with stone bands, and at present it appears doubtful if much coal will be found here.

Rockvale Mine.—Development was continued on a small scale to the south, the seam appearing to be of reasonable quality and thickness, but it is very difficult of access, and the coal is really only a high-grade lignite.

OTAGO CENTRAL MINES.

Shepherd's Creek Mine (Bannockburn).—Pillar-extraction work was suspended in the old mine and a commencement made to develop the seam to the east of the old workings. A dip heading has been driven in a south-westerly direction for a distance of 600 ft., and levels broken away on both sides of the dip. The coal-seam is maintaining its thickness and quality. A Sirocco ventilation fan, 25 in. in diameter, has been installed, and, as a result, working-conditions are considerably improved.

Fache's Pit, Nevis.—Coal was mined on the opencast method during the year, and increased activity was shown chiefly owing to the power used on the Nevis Crossing dredge being steam. There appears to be ample coal available in the Nevis for power purposes, but the field should be properly prospected.

Oturehua Pit.—The underground workings have remained flooded and intermittent opencast mining conducted at the south end of the pit.

Blackstone Hill Pit.—A limited amount of work only was carried out intermittently on the opencast method.

Idaburn Pit.—Mining has continued on the opencast method, and this pit is in a suitable state to supply a large quantity of lignite, but the demand is very limited.

Rough Ridge Mine.—Following intermittent working on a small scale, the lease was surrendered.

Parfit's Pit.—Opencast mining was carried out on a small scale and intermittently, the surface cover being removed by sluicing.

Cambrian Pit.—Opencast mining was continued, but insufficient use appeared to be made of the pit; stripping operations were neglected, and the pit itself was more or less neglected.

Coal Creek Flat.—This pit continues to be worked in an efficient manner. Surface-stripping is kept well ahead by means of sluicing, thereby having plenty of coal for immediate working.

New Cromwell Syndicate.—This is a new mine situated approximately one mile west of Cromwell, and on the river-bank. A dip heading was driven north for a distance of 200 ft. on an outcrop of coal. Levels broken away from the dip have shown the coal to be friable and of poor quality. The ground is very heavy, and future prospects do not appear good.

SOUTH OTAGO DISTRICT.

Freeman's Mine.—Pillar-extraction was continued along the main level and to the rise. A few pillars were also recovered from the dip, but it would appear that only a limited quantity of coal will be recovered from the old workings owing to the small size of the pillars, accompanied by fallen roadways.