

The following is a list of the collieries where such accidents occurred during 1915 and 1916 :—

| Northern District. | | West Coast District. | | Southern District. | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Colliery. | Number of Eye Accidents. | Colliery. | Number of Eye Accidents. | Colliery. | Number of Eye Accidents. |
| Ralph's and Extended .. | 54 | Millerton .. | 4 | Kaitangata .. | 5 |
| Pukemiro .. | 6 | Point Elizabeth .. | 1 | Nightcaps .. | 2 |
| Co-operative (Hikurangi) .. | 1 | Liverpool .. | 1 | Small pits .. | 14 |
| Waipa .. | 9 | North Cape .. | 1 | | |
| Hikurangi .. | 1 | Stockton .. | 4 | | |
| | | Blackball .. | 1 | | |
| | | Denniston .. | 3 | | |
| Total .. | 71 | Total .. | 15 | Total .. | 21 |

It will be observed that collieries at which brown coal is mined are those at which eye accidents are most frequent.

Sufferers by eye accidents are entitled under the Workers' Compensation Act to receive, while off work, one-half their average wage (assessed on the twelve months prior to the accident), and if an eye is lost the compensation payable is 30 per cent. of the £500 maximum. In addition, 12s. 6d. per week is paid from the Coal-miners' Relief Fund; also, if the sufferer is a member of a registered benefit society a further payment of 12s. 6d. per week from such society. At the above rates there has been received by sufferers from eye accidents during 1915 and 1916 compensation or relief to the amount of £1,400; but no money payment can compensate for the loss of eyesight, and preventive measures in the form of a gauze shield are necessary. In mines where safety-lamps are required to be used a better light might be obtained if miners' electric lamps were installed. The wearing of such shields is far less an inconvenience than the compulsory (and absolutely necessary) use of water-jets or sprays at metal-mines when machine-drilling in rock. For breaches of this regulation miners have been heavily fined, and the regulation was proposed by the union officials themselves.

At the West Coast collieries, the lignite-pits of Otago and Southland, and at the Hikurangi collieries, eye accidents are so few that any regulation which may be decided upon need not have application at those places.

The following is an extract from the official notice *re* "Eye Accidents," by Dr. James Fitzgerald, of Dunedin :—

Preventive Measures.

1. The wearing of goggles or a shield of wire gauze in places where there is a likelihood of meeting "proud coal."

NOTE.—A shield of gauze $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 5 in., 64-mesh (*i.e.*, 8 by 8) to the square inch, is generally more suitable than goggles. They can be made, bound with a piece of soft leather for the forehead, with tapes for tying, at a cost of about 9d. each.

2. As soon as eye accident received, report to manager, and proceed to nearest medical man at once. Do not say it is trivial, but look on it as a serious affair. There is danger in delay. Do not wait until the shift is over.

Do not hesitate, if working on night shift, to knock up the doctor. The doctor would prefer to attend to the case at once rather than have an anxious attendance of weeks on the case if patient delays seeking aid.

Do not allow any "handy man" about the pit to use penknives, needles, pins, &c., trying to extract bits of coal, fires from pick-point, &c. These knives, &c., as a rule, are unclean and dangerous, and apt to set up mischief in themselves. Avoid the "handy man" and proceed to the surgery at once.

In cases where no medical man is available report at once to the manager of mine.

The manager should have by him the following: (a) Boracic-acid lotion (saturated—that is, 1 part to 20); (b) perchloride-of-mercury solution (strength, 1 to 4,000); (c) solution of hydrochlorate of cocaine, 5 per cent.; (d) a dropping-pipette; (e) plain absorbent cotton-wool.

The eye should be well bathed with warm solutions of boracic-acid or perchloride-of-mercury solutions.

Manner of bathing: Soak some cotton-wool in lotion and allow the solution to drip into eye, separating the eyelids to allow of this. This should be done frequently, and will ease pain as well as go far to ward off subsequent inflammation.

If much pain experienced with a "pipette," drop one drop of cocaine solution into the eye, and repeat the operation in five minutes, and again in ten minutes.

If no medical man available manager should send patient to the nearest hospital at once.

(d.) SYSTEMATIC TIMBERING.

The most prolific cause of fatal colliery accidents is fall of ground, especially of top coal, containing "sooty backs" or other concealed joints. To prevent such accidents systematic