SECTION III.—ACCIDENTS.

The following is a summary of accidents in and about coal-mines during 1922, with their causes :—

—	Fatal Accidents.		Serious Non-fatal Accidents.	
	Number of Separate Fatal Accidents.	Number of Deaths.	Number of Separate Non-fatal Accidents.	Number of Persons injured, including those injured by Accidents which proved Fatal to their Companions.
Explosions of fire-damp or coal-dust ..	..	..	2	3
Falls of ground	2	2	5	5
Explosives	..	..	2	2
Haulage	2	3	5	5
Miscellaneous—Underground	1	1	12	12
On surface	..	..	3	3
Totals	5	6	29	30

The fatalities being in the proportion of 1·31 per thousand persons employed, and 3·23 per million tons produced.

Of the fatal accidents the following is a short description :—

Sydney Bartholomew, at Denniston, on 24th May.—The deceased, a youth of sixteen, was crushed between a derailed truck of stone and the handrail of the viaduct. No direct evidence is available, but the facts point to the conclusion that deceased was riding on the truck, which became derailed, overturned, and caught deceased.

W. C. Merritt, at Stockton, on 7th June.—The deceased was a miner working in No. 5 section of the Stockton Mine. At the time of the accident he and his brother were splitting a pillar near the outcrop, when a sudden large fall took place, which swung the timber in their place and caught and buried deceased as he and his brother were running back towards safety.

W. E. Booth, at Denniston, on 8th July.—This was an extraordinary accident. It appears that deceased, a miner, was walking up the haulage-road on his way home at the end of his shift when his head struck a low part of the roof. He was picked up unconscious, and died three days later.

D. Veitch and J. Craig, at Wilson's Colliery, Hikurangi, on 4th August.—Both the deceased were miners, and at the time of the accident were going down the incline on their way to work. The brakesmen at the top sent away a set of which all the trucks had not been coupled. Five of the trucks ran down the incline and caught the two deceased, J. Craig being killed instantaneously, and D. Veitch succumbing to his injuries on the same day. Arising out of the circumstances that led to this accident legal proceedings were instituted by the Department against the company and the brakesmen.

Owen Lynch, at Linton Mine, on 11th December.—Deceased, a miner, had had one shot fired in his place, and was preparing for another shot, when he was struck by some coal that fell off a drossy back, and which had probably been shaken by the first shot.

Accounts of the serious but non-fatal accidents are contained in the District Inspectors' reports. Of this class of accident the most marked is the very high-proportion of eye-injuries. During the year four miners each lost the sight of one eye, three of the four cases being in the Waikato. In some of the Waikato mines there is a decided necessity for the miners, when cutting, using some form of eye-protection, on the same lines as that in use at Kaitangata.

SECTION IV.—WORKING OF THE COAL-MINES ACT.

(*a.*) Permitted Explosives.

(Regulations 128 to 134 inclusive.)

The following is a table showing the quantity of permitted explosive used and the number of shots fired at New Zealand coal-mines during 1922 :—

Inspection District.	Quantity of Permitted Explosives used.			Number of Shots fired.	Number of Misfired Shots.				Approximate Quantity of Coal produced.
	A2 Monobel.	Ligdynite.	Bobbinite.		By Defective Explosive.	By Defective Detonators.	By Defective Leads.	Total.	
Northern (*i.e.*, North Island) ..	79,981	..	3,391	90,907	132	322	28	482	362,936
West Coast (of South Island) ..	149,788	15,674	..	187,977	48	582	168	798	855,702
Southern (*i.e.*, Canterbury, Otago, and Southland)	13,417	..	..	21,463	..	33	2	35	131,960
Totals	243,186	15,674	3,391	300,347	180	937	198	1,315	1,350,598

Seventy-two per cent. of the coal produced in the Dominion during 1922 was broken down by permitted explosive, and the average production of coal per pound of explosive used was 5·1 tons, and per shot fired 4·5 tons.