

Taupiri Extended Mine.—On the 9th December a fire broke out in the West section, the result of a crushing that had been taking place through the pillars in the first working having been driven too small to carry the cover. The fire spread so rapidly that it could not be controlled otherwise than by sealing off the whole of the workings on the west side below No. 4 level. The loss of coal as a result of this fire was very serious.

(c.) ELECTRICITY AT COLLIERIES.

(Regulation 160.)

During 1923 there has been a further increase in the number or capacity of electrical installations. The following is a summary of the annual returns, in accordance with Regulation 160 (c), regarding electrical apparatus at collieries :—

Number of collieries at which electrical apparatus is installed	..	..	19
Number of continuous-current installations	..	..	10
Number of alternating-current installations	..	..	9
Number of collieries electrically lighted	..	..	19
Number of collieries using electrical ventilating-machines	..	..	10
Number of collieries using electrical pumping plants	..	..	10
Number of collieries using electrical haulage plants	..	..	10
Number of collieries using electrical screening plants	..	..	4
Number of collieries using electrical miscellaneous plants..	..	..	10
Number of collieries using electrical locomotives	..	..	..
Total horse-power employed from motors on surface	..	..	2,972½
Total horse-power employed from motors below ground	..	..	1,484½

(d.) PROSECUTIONS.

In April a coal-miner employed in the Taupiri Extended Mine was prosecuted and fined for taking a non-permitted explosive into the mine.

In April a coal-miner employed in the Huntly Coal-mine was prosecuted and fined for failing to set sprags in his working-place, and the manager of the mine was prosecuted for failing to provide a sufficient supply of timbers, but the latter information was dismissed.

In May the manager of the Wilson's Colliery was prosecuted and fined for failing to provide adequate ventilation.

In June the manager of the Reefton Coal Company was prosecuted and fined for failing to carry out the requirements of the Act as regards inspection of the mine before the shift started work, and a miner in the same mine was prosecuted and convicted for entering the mine before he had been informed that the mine had been examined.

In August the manager and also the agent of the Pukemiro Mine were prosecuted and fined for failing to comply with the provisions of the Act referring to the weighing of coal and payment for same.

In September a miner was prosecuted for having matches and tobacco while in the Millerton Mine, in which safety-lamps are required.

SECTION V.—LEGISLATION AFFECTING COAL-MINES.

No important alterations were made during the year. On the 8th February additional regulations were gazetted respecting the transfer of moneys in a coal-miners' relief fund to a sick and accident fund; on the 10th May a regulation was gazetted respecting the use of the explosive known as Samsonite No. 3; and on the 29th November a regulation was gazetted revoking paragraph (3) of clause 7 of the regulations of the 1st July, 1915.

I have, &c.,

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Inspecting Engineer and Chief Inspector of Coal-mines.