

(e) ELECTRICITY AT COLLIERIES.

(Regulation 243.)

The following is a summary of the annual returns, in accordance with Regulation 243 (e), regarding electrical apparatus at collieries:—

Number of collieries at which electrical apparatus is installed	..	..	60
Number of continuous-current installations	..	..	8
Number of alternating-current installations	..	..	54
Number of collieries electrically lighted	..	..	41
Number of collieries using electrical ventilating-machines	..	..	49
Number of collieries using electrical pumping plants	..	..	37
Number of collieries using electrical haulage plants	..	..	46
Number of collieries using electrical screening plants	..	..	29
Number of collieries using electrical coal-cutting machines	..	..	4
Number of collieries using electrical miscellaneous plants..	..	..	21
Number of collieries using electrical locomotives	..	..	1
Total horse-power employed from motors on surface	..	..	8,064
Total horse-power employed from motors below ground	..	..	4,126½

(f) PROSECUTIONS.

Twelve informations were laid during 1936 by the District Inspectors of Coal-mines for breaches of the Coal-mines Act and Regulations. Eleven convictions were recorded, and one information (against a mineowner) was dismissed.

Of the eleven successful prosecutions, three were against miners, two against mine-managers, two against underviewers, and one each against a fireman-deputy, a mineowner, a shot-firer, and a secretary of a coal-mining company.

Accounts of the individual prosecutions are given in the reports of the District Inspectors (Annexure A).

SECTION V.—LEGISLATION AFFECTING COAL-MINES.

On the passing of the Coal-mines Amendment Act of 1936 several important amendments became operative.

It provided for an additional search to be made, during working-hours, of the workmen employed underground in safety-lamp mines.

That search is additional to the one that has to be made on the surface at the mine prior to the commencement of work and which is already provided for by section 98 of the principal Act.

When a fireman-deputy considers, in the interests of safety, that he should be accompanied by another person when he is making inspections before the commencement of work in a mine he can now ask for a suitable man to go with him. Should his request be refused by the management of the mine, the matter is to be referred to the District Inspector to decide as to the need of the assistant.

Now every deputy must each day before going off duty enter a report as to the condition of the mine with respect to ventilation, timbering, &c.

Every accessible cavity or "dead-end" where inflammable gas may accumulate within one hundred yards of any working-place must now be examined at least once a day, and every working-place must now be examined by a mine official at least once in every five hours.

Unless other approved means for preventing the escape of rock-dust into the mine air has been provided, no mechanically operated rock-drills, except those of the axial water-feed type, can now be used in New Zealand coal-mines.

Provision has also been made for the establishment of rescue brigade stations in the coal-mining districts and for the imposition of a levy not exceeding 1d. per ton on all marketable coal raised by the mine-owners in a district.

As referred to elsewhere, a small rescue-station has been established at the Liverpool State Colliery, and it is intended soon to have another, and larger, rescue-station operating near Greymouth.

Mr. C. J. Strongman, who in 1929 was reappointed Inspector of Coal-mines for the West Coast District, during 1936 succeeded Mr. I. A. James as Superintendent of State Coal-mines. The vacancy in the Inspection Staff was filled by the appointment of Mr. W. Parsonage to act with Mr. J. Hadercroft as an Inspector of Coal-mines for the West Coast District. Mr. Parsonage has had over twenty years' experience in an official capacity in West Coast mines, including the State coal-mines.

I desire to acknowledge the efficient help and co-operation which I have received from the District Inspectors.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE DUGGAN,

Inspecting Engineer and Chief Inspector of Coal-mines.