

weigh its danger. The use of overhead trolley systems in collieries in the United States has always been a source of astonishment to British mining engineers, although their convenience and economy are very great. The conveyance of black powder in a workmen's train was not only inexcusable but unnecessary. Explosives cannot be carried on ordinary passenger railways, but the conditions of confinement in a colliery tunnel would cause a much greater potential danger than any conceivable conditions above-ground.

Collieries will never become comparatively safe places — they can never be entirely safe — until naked lights of all descriptions are prohibited. Naked lights may be considered to include any sparking or danger of sparking of electric appliances, the use of any form of blasting except "permitted" powders and electric detonators, and, of course, the use of all open lights such as acetylene torches and unenclosed oil lamps.

We shall await with interest the comment of United States coal journals on this disaster, and the more exact details which will be presented at the enquiry.

SUBMARINE COAL LEASE QUESTION IN NOVA SCOTIA.

Text of Recent Act.

The Legislature of Nova Scotia, during the session recently prorogued, passed an act "to legalize and validate an Order-in-Council respecting a Certain Coal Area in Cape Breton," which conveys to the Nova Scotia Steel & Coal Company the right to enter upon the leased areas of the Dominion Coal Company abutting upon the north side of the area leased by the Scotia Company and forming the territory tributary to the workings of the Florence Colliery. The permission given is limited to a distance of one thousand feet in width by approximately 5,000 feet in length, and has the effect of increasing the area tributary to the Florence Slope by a parallelogram of that extent.

Compensation to the Dominion Coal Company is to be paid under the arbitration clause of Chapter 16 of the Acts of 1918, and such compensation will be in addition to the usual royalty of 12½ cents per ton on the coal mined and sold from the transferred area, which the Scotia Company will pay to the Government.

The validation of this Order-in-Council was regarded by the Nova Scotia Government as merely a measure of temporary relief to the working conditions of the Florence Colliery, and at the recent session of the Legislature an act was passed giving to the Government general powers to deal with the submarine coal tracts so as to assure as far as possible that these tracts shall be worked most advantageously and in the best interests of the Province. The text of the Act is as follows:

1.—The Governor-in-Council may whenever he deems it expedient appoint two or more persons, of whom the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines may be one to be commissioners to inquire into and concerning whether any worked or unworked submarine coal mining area now held under lease and subject to the provisions of the Mines Act, can, if

unworked by advantageously worked or if worked be more advantageously worked in the best interests of the Province by some other leasee of coal mining areas that are subject to the provisions of the "Mines Act," and to report thereon to the Governor-in-Council with any recommendation such commissioners may think fit.

2.—For the purpose of any inquiry such Commissioners shall have all the powers, privileges, authorities and immunities of a Commissioner appointed under "The Public Inquiries Act" passed at the present session of the Legislature.

3.—Notwithstanding any of the provisions of any act of the legislature of Nova Scotia and notwithstanding any lease of coal mining areas heretofore or hereafter issued under authority of an Act of the Legislature of Nova Scotia, the Governor-in-Council on the report of such Commissioners is authorized and empowered to make such orders and regulations as he may deem expedient for the purpose of ensuring that such submarine coal mining area shall be worked in the best interests of the Province, and for greater certainty but not so as to restrict the generality of the foregoing terms of this section it is hereby declared that the Governor-in-Council may by Order-in-Council, vest in any leasee of any coal mining area that is subject to the provisions of the "Mines Act" any submarine coal mining area that is so subject and is held by any other person as lessee.

4.—When any such area is vested, as aforesaid, the person in whom the same is so vested shall hold the same subject to the same terms and conditions and covenants upon which it was held immediately before being so vested and on such other terms and conditions as the Governor-in-Council deems expedient.

5.—Compensation shall be made by the person in whom such areas are so vested to the person so divested of such areas and the same shall be determined by the Governor-in-Council and may be according to such method and on such basis as he deems expedient and without restricting the generality of the foregoing such method and basis may be in one or more of the following ways or partly in one way and partly in another, namely:

- (a) vesting as aforesaid of areas in one person in satisfaction in whole or in part of those vested as aforesaid in another person;
- (b) a payment of a fixed sum in cash or in instalments; two hundred and forty pounds of coal which may be mined from the area so vested;
- (c) a payment or royalty per ton of two thousand and two hundred and forty pounds of coal which may be mined from the area so vested;

6.—The compensation for any area so vested shall stand in the stead of such area so vested, and any claim to or encumbrance thereon shall as respects the person in whom the area is so vested be converted into a claim to or upon compensation and shall no longer affect such area; provided that where such compensation is wholly or in part in cash the same may be paid to the Prothonotary of the Supreme Court at Halifax, and the same may be paid out to the person or persons entitled thereto on application to a Judge of the Supreme Court who may make such orders and direct such notice to be given as he deems necessary to protect all persons interested in the cash paid to the Prothonotary as aforesaid.