

and adjoining places, and also the shotlighters occasionally reporting missed shots, mostly in District No. 1, all of which reports were entered in a book kept at the mine for the purpose.

3. Besides the preceding reports we have frequent and thorough inspections of all the working places, old workings, haulage ways, and the intake and return airways, as to gas, ventilating, fan, dust, watering, blasting, safety lamps and timbering by the Government Inspectors of Mines, Messrs. James McGregor and Archibald Dick.

Taking these inspections in this order—

1. We have no report from the workmen as to any impalpable dust in the ventilation or at the working faces as to Special Rule No. 52, as to "impurity in the air of the mine" nor as to lighting the gas blower from bore-hole in No. 3 Mine, which is a dangerous practice, and which was frequently done sometimes for the purpose of warming the workmen, in breach of Special Rule No. 54. The common but highly dangerous practice among the miners of testing the quantity of fire-damp escaping from a "blower" by igniting it with their lamps, is peremptorily prohibited.

As to want of timber, in Inspector Dick's Report of November, 15th, 1901, he says:—"The men are all instructed that if at any time they should be short of timber and the roof bad, they must leave the face until it is made secure. This was additional warning to the following Special Rule No. 5, which they to some extent, if not altogether, neglected to observe: "If from accident or any other cause miners are at any time unable to find a sufficient supply of prop wood, at the place appointed, when it is unsafe to continue their work without it, they are expressly forbidden to remain at their working places."

The workmen in general, also, more or less failed to observe Special Rules Nos. 62 and 75 as to dangerous places, and as to smoking and matches. "If, in proceeding to their working places, or in travelling along any formed road or other part of the works (the maintenance of which, under these Regulations, devolves on the owner or manager), miners or other workmen shall meet with or see any fall from the roofs, or shall observe any dangerous place in the roofs, walls or *elsewhere* in their progress, they shall not pass the same, but shall instantly report the occurrence to the manager or roadsman, or other person known to have the maintenance of such places under his charge; and miners or other workmen shall not return past the fall or dangerous place until the same shall have been made secure, which it shall be imperative on the manager, overman or other person having the charge forthwith to do."

Special Rule No. 75.—"Wherever explosive gas is known to exist, and safety lamps are used, no person shall be allowed to smoke tobacco in such part of the mine, or to have in his possession any lucifer match or other material intended for lighting tobacco."

2. The daily reports by firemen and overmen are nearly as complete as practicable with, I might say, one exception, viz., that of not thoroughly recognising the importance of recording in Report Book the withdrawal of workmen in any occasion whatever.

The overmen and firemen were certificated and competent officials.

3. The various and frequent inspections reported to the Government by their Inspectors, Messrs. James McGregor and Archibald Dick, from November 9th, 1898, up to date of explosion, May 22nd, 1902, show the history of these mines very clearly.

These inspections, general and special, were made by specific instructions from the Hon. the Minister of Mines, in order to have the provisions of the Coal Mines Regulation Act and Special Rules pertaining thereto clearly and safely carried out.

More thorough inspections beyond examining all the accessible parts of a mine and the surface arrangements, such as boilers, ventilating fans, and engines, haulage, electric and air compressing plants, workshops, stables, offices, lamp and wash houses, cannot be had.

Such inspections were generally made by Messrs. McGregor and Dick, and specially by Mr. Dick, and show a marked and gradual improvement in these mines, by way of discipline, bratticing, ventilating and blasting, towards safety.

This is no doubt attributable to the Company's acquiescence and the unflagging vigilance of the Department of Mines, Victoria, B. C., whose Minister was extremely desirous that the provisions of the Act should be carried out to the fullest extent, so as to render the mines as safe as possible.

There is still room for improvement by Company, as previously referred to in ventilation, haulage, watering of dust and blasting, and safety lamps and discipline, but I do not see where there could be any improvement on the inspections made by the Government Inspector of Mines, and particularly those inspections of old workings for accumulations of gas therein.