

LICENSES TO SEARCH FOR MINES, GRANTS IN FEE, &c.

A great advantage in the way of mining in this country is the fact that so little of its area is occupied or held in exclusive possession as yet. The lumbering licenses though extensive give no claim either to the surface soil or the mineral contents which may occur beneath. The same applies to agricultural grants. Mining licenses only, which are held for one year and can be renewed twice for a similar period, on payment of an extra fee, are exclusive as regards minerals during their continuance. They are limited to one square mile of area. A mining lease or grant, with fifty acres of surface free for mining plant and erections, &c., can be obtained upon payment of a further fee and fulfilment of certain conditions as regards working and expenditure thereon, extending over a period of five years, but the owner can at any time during that period obtain his grant in fee on giving satisfactory proof of having complied with the conditions and having expended the required sum in working the mine, &c.

The accompanying tabulated statement of minerals taken from the Customs' returns, will, I have no doubt, prove of interest in connection with this paper. These returns are not, however, by any means as complete as they might have been, and both the quantity of ore shipped and value thereof are much underestimated. Even for last year I find that while but 19,150 tons of pyrites are set down in the table