

(2) As these small mines are situated on the State Coal Reserve and therefore must be regarded as part of the State's own mining operations, the State Mines Department should be required to accept greater responsibility for their proper management. There should be appointed a sufficient number of first-class certificated managers to control these mines in convenient groups, and to exercise over them efficient and regular supervision. In the Ten-mile Creek area there are five party mines working, and in the immediate neighbourhood there are several others. In our opinion, a first-class certificated manager should be appointed by the State to control this group of mines. Each small mine might still have its fireman-deputy in charge, but his duties would be similar to those which are required of a fireman-deputy in a larger mine who is in charge of a section only. He would be under the control and direction of the mine-manager. The question whether a sufficient royalty should be charged against the mine to meet the cost of management is one for the Department, but there should be nothing to suggest in any way that the manager is an employee of the working parties. He should be the direct employee of the Mines Department and be responsible only to the Department for his work. Other conveniently situated groups of mines could similarly be brought under the management of men holding first-class certificates.

(3) That section 60 of the Coal-mines Act be amended so as to eliminate the provision that the holder of a fireman-deputy's certificate may be a manager of a mine employing up to eight men, and to require that, independent of the number of men employed therein, no mine shall be under the sole charge of any one holding a certificate of lower grade than that of a Second-Class Mine-manager.

**(7) And generally to make inquiry into any matter or thing arising out of or connected with the several subjects of inquiry hereinbefore mentioned or which, in your opinion, may be of assistance in fully ascertaining, explaining, and arriving at a fair and just conclusion in respect to the prevention of similar accidents, and to report whether any additional legislation is necessary and the scope of same, and whether any amendment or addition to the regulations included in the existing law is required to provide reasonable and proper safeguards against such accidents.**

Under this heading we further recommend as follows :—

- (1) *Safety-lamps.*—It was suggested to us in the evidence that in enforcing the use of safety-lamps in this mine the Inspector had exceeded his powers. We have not gone very thoroughly into this matter in view of the fact that we are informed that the regulations are under review, but in our opinion if the Inspector could only secure the use of safety-lamps under conditions in Kaye's Mine by exceeding his statutory power, the amendments of the regulations should go far enough to ensure that the Inspector has all the necessary powers.
- (2) *Telephone Connections.*—We are of the opinion that all mines should be connected with the district telephone exchange.
- (3) *Inspectors' Reports and Diaries.*—The Inspectors' reports and diaries which we examined contained no statements as to the satisfactory compliance with the provisions of the Coal-mines Act and regulations, with the single exception of the stone-dust regulations. They therefore afforded no direct evidence that any other regulations were complied with. Attention was, however, called to breaches of regulations which were observed on the different visits made. We think it desirable that the Inspectors should note in their diaries compliance with the regulations under different headings, as for instance—report book; the keeping up to date of the mine plan every three months as provided by the Act; the self-recording indicator required to be attached to the fan; the condition of the bratticing, stoppings, doors, and other adjuncts to ventilation; the steps being taken to provide adequate support to roofs and sides; the storage of explosives and other regulations the observance of which is essential in the interests of safety.
- (4) “*Self-rescuers.*”—It was suggested in evidence that it would be advisable to make it compulsory for all miners to be provided with an approved “self-rescuer,” which they should carry with them every day as a part of their normal equipment. We are of opinion that this would be impracticable. Emergencies requiring the use of self-rescuers are fortunately of very infrequent occurrence. Many mines have worked for twenty or more years without the occasion for the use of a self-rescuer arising. It would be impossible to induce all workmen to carry self-rescuers and to continue to give them the proper care for such long periods on the chance that they might at some time be required. If an emergency did arise it would probably be found that the self-rescuers were not available or that they were not in good condition. We consider that it would be much better to make it compulsory for a supply of self-rescuers to be provided at each mine, to be kept in each section of the mine in the care of the official in charge of the section.

*Conclusion.*—In conclusion we would like to record our opinion that the escape of Boote and Burnett was entirely due to the presence of mind, resourcefulness, and courage displayed by the former immediately after the explosion.