

than the annual increase of the number of persons employed, and therefore the death-rate (that is, the proportion of deaths to persons employed) has fallen, not risen; second, that in mines there has also been a great increase in the number of persons employed, and, though the figures showing the numbers are not yet available, there is good reason to think there is no material increase in the death-rate; third, in factories and in quarries the increase in the death-rate is to be attributed entirely to the condition of trade. An examination of the statistics of persons killed and injured in factories shows that the numbers regularly increase with the improvement in trade, and always reach a maximum in the years when trade is at its best; and there can be no doubt that the great increase during the past twelve months is due to this cause—the improvement of trade—which causes work to be done under high pressure, and therefore with greater risk, and which brings into employment a large number of less skilled persons, who are more likely to cause accidents than the permanent hands. The increase of fatal accidents from this cause extends to employments which do not come within the Workmen's Compensation Act, such as shipping, where the increase of deaths during the period under consideration amounts to 23 per cent.

As regards non-fatal injuries, the increase of reported accidents is greater than in the case of fatal accidents. The reason for this is, that the conditions under which non-fatal accidents are required to be reported leave in practice a considerable discretion to the employers of labour, and that the attention directed to accidents by the working of the Compensation Act has had the effect of leading them to report a larger number of cases than formerly. The improvement of trade, therefore, accounts for part of the increase in non-fatal accidents; the remainder of the increase is merely apparent, and is due to better reporting.

As stated before, the Secretary of State is advised that no part of the increase in actual accidents can in any way be attributed to the Workmen's Compensation Act.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, 13, Victoria Street.

I am, &c.,

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