

(g.) A cheesemaker's assistant mounted a small table with the intention of putting a belt on a shaft as soon as the manager had stopped the machinery. It is surmised that the assistant either overbalanced and clutched at the shaft, or else attempted to balance himself by placing his arm around the shaft. The result was that the sleeve of his coat caught on a set-pin, he was carried twice round the shaft, and his spine was broken, death occurring a few days later.

In connection with the precautionary measures against accidents, it is found that in some countries lower premium rates are charged at insurance offices for those establishments in which extra protection against accident is afforded to the workers; and at the International Labour Conference in last October this question was considered, when it was decided to make a survey of such measures as may be in force in the several countries. Probably no great variation in the premium rates in New Zealand could be made, seeing that all factories are under close inspection, and it cannot be said that employers fail to any appreciable extent to provide all reasonable safeguards. The inquiry of the International Labour Office should, however, prove of value on this subject.

An International Conference of Labour Statisticians was also held at Geneva in November last, for the purpose of discussing the principles and methods of industrial accident statistics from the point of view of international comparison. The Conference considered that a complete standardization of statistics in the countries represented at the Conference is almost impossible at the present time, owing to the varied existing legislation in the countries. The necessity of internationally comparable statistics was, however, strongly urged, as such statistics, however limited in their scope, would be of great value to each country in furnishing information as to the accident risk, the chief causes of accidents, and the results of measures for the prevention of accidents. It might be mentioned that international co-operation might lead to machine-makers being induced to embody sound practical safeguards in the designs of their machines, and to eliminate as far as possible all dangerous features from them. There are certain dangerous parts that are common to most machines, which could perhaps be guarded more effectively and economically by the makers. Such an arrangement would be of mutual benefit to the workers in the countries concerned.

In last year's report it was stated that a special inquiry was proposed into the extent of the absences from work due to sickness, accident, &c., and into the question as to what effect, if any, a high or low temperature or the humidity of the air might have on the health and output of the workers. Arrangements were made accordingly for a supply of hygrometers, but, as satisfactory instruments were not obtainable locally, they have been purchased from England; these have just arrived, and are now being distributed.

We have also communicated with the Director of Industrial Hygiene of the Commonwealth of Australia with a view to adopting uniform methods in order to enable us to provide a comparison with that country.

In the meantime returns for last year have been obtained from typical factories throughout the Dominion in eight important industries, showing the amount of absence of whole-time workers through sickness and accident, and the results are shown in the following return:—

ABSENCE OF WORKERS THROUGH ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS.

Industry.	Number of Factories which supplied Returns.	Number of Full-time Workers in Factories which supplied Returns.	Number of such Workers absent at some Period during the Year.	Total Number of Days' Absence.	Average Absence for Whole of Full-time Workers.	Equivalent to One Worker being constantly absent out of Number of Workers stated below.
					Days.	
Engineering ..	21	985	Accident 90 Illness 303	1,476 2,199	1.49 2.23	183 122
Clothing-manufacturing	9	755	Accident 3 Illness 213	42 2,824	0.05 3.74	5,480 73
Confectionery and biscuit-making	5	823	Accident 12 Illness 97	287 1,697	0.34 2.06	805 133
Joinery, sash and door making, sawmilling	12	202	Accident 20 Illness 47	496 434	2.45 2.14	111 128
Woollen-manufacturing	4	1,154	Accident 22 Illness 375	352 6,090	0.305 5.27	898 52
Boot-manufacturing	5	355	Accident 8 Illness 90	100 586	0.28 1.65	978 166
Match-making ..	2	56	Accident 6 Illness 44	140 304	2.50 5.42	109 50
Printing and stationery manufacturing	12	407	Accident 8 Illness 142	54 1,079	0.13 2.65	2,107 103

If the above figures applied to all classes of factories in the Dominion there would be a constant absence from work of 1,145 workers on account of sickness and of 221 workers due to accident out of a total of 97,731 workers employed.