

SECTION III.—ACCIDENTS.

The following is a summary of accidents in and about coal-mines during 1924, with their causes :—

—	Fatal Accidents.		Serious Non-fatal Accidents.	
	Number of Separate Fatal Accidents.	Number of Deaths.	Number of Separate Non-fatal Accidents.	Number of Persons injured, including those injured by Accidents which proved Fatal to their Companions.
Explosions of fire-damp or coal-dust ..	..	..	..	..
Falls of ground	2	2	6	7
Explosives	..	..	1	1
Haulage	7	7	7	7
Miscellaneous—Underground	1	1	6	6
On surface	..	..	4	4
Totals	10	10	24	25

The fatalities being in the proportion of 2·05 per thousand persons employed, and 4·80 per million tons produced.

A marked feature of the fatal accidents is that seven of them were haulage accidents, and that four of these were to elderly men over sixty-five years of age. The following is an account of the fatal accidents :—

At Stockton Mine, on the 10th January, Treyton Potter, 32 years of age, employed as brakesman on the electric-locomotive road was crushed beneath the brake-car and killed instantaneously. After getting on the heavy grade across the Mangatina Creek the wheels of the electric locomotive skidded, and the train of trucks moved back till held by the Fell brakes on the centre rail. The deceased had also used the brake on the brake-car, but there is no evidence as to how deceased got off the brake-car, nor as to how he came to get under it. The Coroner's verdict was to the effect that the death was accidental, and that no blame was attachable to any one.

At Rotowaro Mine, on the 13th February, William Maddison, 66 years of age, employed as a shiftman and trucker, was seriously injured and died the following day. A jig-pin pulled out and the full truck ran down the jig. Deceased, though warned to stand clear, gripped the full truck as it was passing him and held on to it till it tipped up on the landing at the bottom of the jig. Deceased was flung over the top of the truck and against the pillars on the low side of the level. The Coroner's verdict was to the effect that the death was purely accidental.

At the Liverpool State Mine, on the 3rd March, John Kennedy, aged 65 years, was crushed by a full truck against an overhead tramway and died almost immediately. A truck had been taken off the main haulage-road and turned into the bunker road leading to the boiler-house. It was moving slowly on a down grade when deceased stepped on to the bunker-road in order to pass under the overhead gangway. Deceased evidently did not hear the warning shouted to him and was struck on the back by the truck, and at the same time his head came in contact with the underneath side of the overhead gangway.

At Pukemiro Mine, on the 4th March, Ernest Gardner, 18 years of age, met with a serious accident which resulted in his death on the 24th December. Deceased was engaged as a clipper, and at the time of accident was taking an empty truck from an endless rope haulage into a branch road. To do this he had to cross the full road of the haulage. Before he had got his empty clear it was struck by a full race travelling on the rope-road, and the empty was derailed and deceased crushed between the empty and the side of the pillar. Deceased sustained a fractured pelvis and serious internal injuries, to which he succumbed nine months later. At the Coroner's inquest a verdict of accidental death was returned.

At Cromwell Mine, on the 11th March, Robert Thomson, 55 years of age, died from carbon-monoxide poisoning. Deceased was manager of the mine. An underground fire had occurred on the previous day, and on the 11th deceased went down the mine to take steps to cope with the fire. On his way out of the mine deceased collapsed as a result of inhaling carbon monoxide from the fire. Though brought out of the mine he failed to recover and died.

At Millerton Mine, on the 12th March, an old man named Thomas Riley, employed greasing rope-road rollers, was knocked over by a full truck, which passed over and fractured his left leg; he died the following day in Westport Hospital. The haulage-rope is a slow-moving one, and there is sufficient space between the roads to allow a person to pass. Prior to the accident deceased had been treated for a serious liver complaint, and the medical evidence at the inquest was to the effect that cirrhosis of the liver combined with the shock from the injuries received in the accident was the cause of his death.

At Millerton Mine, on the 9th June, William Gilmour, 69 years of age, was killed by a fall of roof-coal. Deceased was employed as a deputy, and at the time of the accident was engaged along with a miner in trimming the coal roof in a heading 9 ft. wide by 7 ft. high. From the evidence at the inquest it appears that deceased had endeavoured to bring down a bad piece from the low side with a bar, and then started to walk under it in order to get to the high side, when the piece of coal, which weighed about 10 cwt., fell out and caught him. The Coroner returned a verdict of accidental death, with no blame attachable to any one.

At the Liverpool State Mine, on the 23rd July, Joseph Higson, 57 years of age, was struck by a runaway empty truck and received injuries to his head from which he died on the 27th July. The deceased was employed as a shiftman, and part of his duties was to see that timber was taken to the working-places. A race consisting of a timber-trolley and two empties was sent up a jig and the full race landed. Deceased, who had been at the landing, apparently thought the empty race had also arrived at the top and started to walk up the jig, when he was struck by one of the empties which,