

FACTORIES ACT.

Year.	Number of Factories registered.	Movement.	Number of Factory Workers.	Movement.
1913-14 (before the war) ..	13,469	94 (increase)	87,517	919 (increase).
1914-15	13,937	468 "	88,812	1,295 "
1915-16 (since the war began) ..	13,214	723 (decrease)	83,011	5,801 (decrease).
1916-17	12,455	759 "	78,188	4,823 "
1917-18	12,485	30 (increase)	79,653	1,465 (increase).
1918-19	12,444	41 (decrease)	82,783	3,130 "
1919-20 (after the war) ..	13,490	1,046 (increase)	85,591	2,808 "
1920-21	13,661	171 "	96,603	11,012 "
1921-22	14,013	352 "	96,980	377 "
1922-23	14,535	522 "	92,608	4,372 (decrease).
1923-24	15,009	474 "	97,731	5,123 (increase).
1924-25	15,868	859 "	99,423	1,692 "

The figures as to the number of factories and the workers employed therein do not purport to coincide with those of the Government Statistician (Census of Industrial Manufactures), as his returns, which are drawn up purely for statistical purposes, do not cover various small establishments that are included as factories under the Factories Act.

ACCIDENTS.

As mentioned in last year's report, the necessity of internationally comparable statistics was urged by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians held at Geneva in November, 1923. Arrangements have now been made with the New Zealand Government Statistician to compile such statistics from the reports of accidents required to be given to us by factory-occupiers under section 41 of the Factories Act; the results will be published in detailed form by the Government Statistician. In order to be comparable with the statistics of other countries these results will cover the calendar year instead of the financial year, and the following particulars are therefore given for the same period. (The accidents that occurred during January-March, 1924, were also included in the figures in last year's report, being within the financial year then dealt with.)

The reports of accidents in factories during the year show that out of a total of 1,979, 54 occurred to workers under sixteen years of age, 338 to those between sixteen and twenty, and the remaining 1,587 to those above that age: 22 of the accidents to workers under sixteen occurred in confectionery and biscuit factories where a large proportion of the employees are young persons—the accidents were generally of a slight nature; the remaining 32 occurred in small numbers in various industries.

The largest number of the accidents occurred in meat-freezing (844), engineering (142), sawmilling (116), joinery (80).

Of the total of 1,979 accidents, 86 occurred to females.

As accidents in industries are generally considered to be chiefly due to machinery, it is interesting to note that only about one-fourth of the number last year—viz., 499 out of 1,979—arose from this cause; even allowing for the large number of minor accidents in freezing-works that are not due to machinery, the number arising from other causes is considerably greater. The same conclusions may be drawn from the statistics of other countries: for instance, the figures published by the United States Steel Corporation classify the causes of 200,000 accidents; of these only 8.83 per cent. were connected with machinery. The Chief Inspector of Factories, England, also states that the great bulk of the accidents in factories are not caused by machinery, and that therefore only a relatively small proportion can be prevented by mechanical safeguards. The principal causes of the accidents in New Zealand were found to be as follows: Due to machinery, 499; falls of persons, 185; tools breaking or glancing off the work, 468; strains and septic wounds, 121; others, 706: total, 1,979.

A classification showing the extent of disability is as follows: Temporary disability, 1,895; permanent partial disability, 74; permanent total disability, 1; fatal, 9: Total, 1,979.

Of the fatal accidents recorded the following particulars are given:—

(1.) A mechanic working in a boxmaking-factory entered the main-shaft well to oil the shafting, when his apron was caught and drawn around a revolving shaft; his clothes were torn off and he was thrown against the wall, causing death through fracture of his skull. Instructions had been issued by the employer that any worker entering the well must remove his apron or loose clothing, and the worker was fully aware of them.

(2.) A general labourer in a brickmaking plant was caught in a conveyor-belt while cleaning clay from a pulley, and was killed. In work of this kind it is necessary that the clay be removed as the work proceeds without stopping the machinery; on the instructions of the Department, however, automatic scrapers have been attached to the pulleys, and all pulleys have been protected by safety appliances.