

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 "
1925-26	16,311	443 "	99,118	305 (decrease).

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.

It will be noticed that the total number of factories shows an increase of 443, while there is a decrease of 305 in the number of workers. The increase in the number of factories is due to the fact that many small factories were registered during the year, particularly in districts where hydro-electric power has become available and small motors can be installed cheaply. The decrease in the number of factory employees is due to the reduction of the workers employed in sawmills, dairy factories, woollen-mills, and women employed in the millinery trade. The last-mentioned is stated to be caused by the smaller amount of trimming now required in women's hats.

ACCIDENTS.

As mentioned in last year's report, in order that the accidents statistics may be comparable with the statistics of other countries, as urged by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1923, the figures cover the calendar year instead of the financial year.

The total number of accidents in factories reported during the year ending 31st December last is 2,426, an increase of 447 over the last year. There was not, however, any actual increase in the number of accidents, the extra number reported being accounted for by the increased vigilance of the inspection. The number of fatal and serious accidents was, in fact, less than in the previous year. The largest number of accidents occurred in the meat-freezing industry, 1,042 being reported. These were largely of a minor nature, such as cuts on the hand, bruises, &c.

Of the 2,426 accidents reported, 68 occurred to workers under sixteen years of age, 406 to those between sixteen and twenty, and the remaining 1,952 to those above that age. The accidents to young persons were mainly of a minor character. In all cases careful inquiries are made to ensure that every possible precaution against accident is taken. The number of accidents due to machinery is 576, which is, like last year's total, only about one-fourth of the number of accidents that occurred. It will be seen, however, that out of the 7 fatal accidents during the year 5 were caused by machinery. It is interesting to note that no accidents occurred through the workers' hair coming into contact with machinery, no doubt due to the now prevailing fashion of short hair amongst females. Thirteen of the accidents occurred as a result of loose clothing fouling machinery; one of these proved fatal, see below. Precautionary notices have been issued to all factory-occupiers drawing attention to the risk of loose clothing where the workers are attending to machinery. The other principal causes of the accidents were found to be as follows: Falls of persons from stairs, ladders, platforms, &c., 229; faulty handling of tools, 480; handling of other objects (viz., objects dropped or tipping over, strain due to handling, falling of objects whilst loading, &c.), 615; poisonous, hot, or corrosive substances, 101; others (miscellaneous), 413: total, 2,426.

A classification showing the extent of disability is as follows: Temporary disability, 2,287; permanent partial disability, 132; permanent total disability, nil; fatalities, 7: total, 2,426.

Of the 7 fatal accidents that occurred in factories the following particulars are given:—

(1.) An engineer employed on a municipal bitumen-mixing plant was returning from oiling a set of cogs when the wind blew his coat into contact with an exposed pair of the cogs; the worker's arm was drawn into the cog-wheels, with the result that the arm was pulled out of the socket, necessitating amputation at the hospital. The worker died from the combined shock of the accident and operation. Acting on the instruction of the Department in conjunction with the Inspector of Machinery, the local authority subsequently affixed guards to the wheels.

(2.) A man was employed embedding a pipe in concrete. While so engaged another worker on a landing about 40 ft. from the ground went to the edge of the landing and dropped a sack of tar material weighing about 90 lb. The bag fell on the worker below, striking him on the back of the neck, causing injuries to the spinal cord and paralysis of the respiratory system. The man was removed