

SECTION II.—PERSONS EMPLOYED.

Inspection District.						Average Number of Persons employed during 1908.		
						Above Ground.	Below Ground.	Total.
Northern	...	...	...	...	...	122	512	634
West Coast	...	...	...	...	...	562	1,646	2,208
Southern	...	...	...	...	...	308	744	1,052
Totals, 1908	...	...	...	...	...	992*	2,902	3,894*
Totals, 1907	...	...	...	...	...	1,143	2,767	3,910

*The decline in the number of persons employed is confined to those employed above ground, and this is due to the completion of extensive surface works on the West Coast coalfields.

SECTION III.—ACCIDENTS.

In 1908 four separate fatal accidents occurred in and about the coal-mines of this Dominion, causing the loss of five lives. Compared with the previous year, there is a decrease of six in the number of fatal accidents, and of seven in the number of lives lost. The actual number of deaths by itself does not afford a complete test of the comparative safety or danger of the coal-mining industry in 1908. True comparisons can only be made by taking into account either the number of persons employed or the quantity of mineral obtained. The following summary of the annual ratio of persons killed per 1,000 employed in the collieries of the most important countries of the world during the last ten years, regarding which official statistics have been published, will permit of that comparison by which the safety or danger of the coal-mines in this Dominion may be tested.

Country.						Annual Ratio of Persons killed per 1,000 employed.	Years.
United Kingdom	...	...	...	...	...	1.29	1897-1906 (ten years).
United States of America, and Canada	...	...	...	...	...	3.33	1898-1907 "
Prussia (bituminous-coal mines)	...	...	...	...	...	2.13	1897-1906 "
" (brown-coal mines)	...	...	...	...	...	2.07	" "
Austria (bituminous-coal mines)	...	...	...	...	...	1.03	" "
" (brown-coal mines)	...	...	...	...	...	1.74	" "
France	...	...	...	...	...	1.81	" "
Belgium	...	...	...	...	...	1.06	" "
India	...	...	...	...	...	0.86	1898-1906 (nine years).
Natal	...	...	...	...	...	4.91	1897-1906 (ten years).
New South Wales	...	...	...	...	...	2.14	" "
Queensland	...	...	...	...	...	1.20	" "
Victoria	...	...	...	...	...	2.28	" "
New Zealand	...	...	...	...	...	1.56	1899-1908 "

It will be seen that New Zealand occupies the sixth place as regards the safety of the coal-miner, among fourteen coal-producing countries.

The following is a summary of fatal and non-fatal accidents classified, and cause, in this Dominion during 1908.

	Fatal Accidents.		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 firedamp	...	...	1	3
Falls in mine	3	4	6	7
Shaft accidents	...	...	...	...
Miscellaneous—Underground	...	...	15	15
On surface	1	1	1	1
Totals	4	5	23	26

Lives lost per 1,000 persons employed, 1.28.