II. PERSONS EMPLOYED.

The following statement shows the number of persons ordinarily employed in or about the metalliferous mines of the Dominion during the year:—

Classification.	Inspection District.			Total, 1915.
	Northern.	West Coast.	Southern.	
Gold, silver, and scheelite	1,870	1,356	921	4,149
Cinnabar	...	...	44	44
Tin	6	...	...	6
Copper	...	...	6	6
Total for 1915	1,876	1,356	971	**4,205**
Total for 1914	1,976	1,380	1,114	4,470

The decrease in the number of persons employed may, to a considerable extent, be attributed to enlistment for military service.

III. ACCIDENTS.

The following is a summary of persons killed or seriously injured in metalliferous mines during 1915:—

Inspection District.	Explosions.		Falls of Ground.		In Shafts.		Miscellaneous Underground.		Surface.		About Dredges.		Total.	
	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.	Killed.	Seriously Injured.
Northern	2	4	2	2	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	6	6
West Coast	...	...	1	3	...	...	1	1	1	1	...	...	3	5
Southern	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	2
Totals	**2**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**1**	...	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	...	**2**	**10**	**13**

Being at the rate of 2·38 fatalities per 1,000 persons employed.

TABLE SHOWING NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM ACCIDENTS AT NEW ZEALAND METAL-MINES AND DREDGES DURING TEN YEARS 1906 TO 1915 (INCLUSIVE).

Cause of Accident.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.
Explosion	3	...	3	2	2	1	...	...	...	2
Fall of ground	3	2	2	1	1	2	1	5	3	4
In shafts	1	...	1	3	5	...	1	3	1	1
Miscellaneous—										
Underground	...	...	2	1	...	...	2	...	...	2
On surface	1	2	6	5	3	2	...	2	2	1
About dredges	6	3	1	2	4	...	1	...	...	...
Total killed	14	7	15	14	15	5	5	10	6	10
Number of employees	8,716	9,389	8,880	7,651	8,121	7,400	5,239	4,941	4,470	4,205
Number of persons killed per 1,000 employed	1·60	0·84	1·69	1·83	1·84	0·67	0·95	2·02	1·34	2·38

During the past ten years the proportion of fatal accidents at metal-mines per 1,000 persons employed has averaged 1·32.

From the table describing the fatal mining accidents it will be seen that two fatalities may be attributed to absence of care by mine officials—viz., in the cases of Hugh McQuillan, at Ross Mine, and James Walker, at the Lake Hochsteller Water-race. In the case of Alfred Stone, killed at the Talisman Mine, the evidence given at the inquest showed that the deceased and his mate had exceeded the maximum number of shots (six) at one time, as provided by the regulations; there was no evidence, however, to show that the accident was due to such negligence. The fatalities to David Kennedy, Max Oertmann, and James Lanini were due to the sufferers working in dangerous situations which more careful men would have avoided. The remaining four fatal accidents may be classed as unpreventable by regulations or by reasonable supervision, although some suspicion may be attached to the gelignite which killed John P. Vocasivitch and Alfred Stone on different occasions at the Talisman Mine.

During 1915 there occurred six fatal accidents by which seven lives were lost, and seven other serious but not fatal accidents, all by premature explosion of gelignite at our coal and metal mines