

TABLE 85.—FATAL ACCIDENTS IN NEW ZEALAND COAL-MINES—continued.

Year.						Total Persons employed above and below.	Lives lost.		
							Per Million Tons raised.	Per 1,000 Persons employed.	Number by Accident.
1889	..	..	..	..	..	1,717	6.82	2.37	4
1890	..	..	..	..	..	1,846	12.55	4.33	8
1891	..	..	..	..	..	1,693	5.98	2.36	4
1892	..	..	..	..	..	1,681	1.48	0.66	1
1893	..	..	..	..	..	1,888	7.23	2.64	5
1894	..	..	..	..	..	1,899	8.33	3.16	6
1895	..	..	..	..	..	1,799	6.88	3.33	5
1896	..	..	..	..	..	1,937	83.24	34.07	66*
1897	..	..	..	..	..	1,912	4.75	2.09	4
1898	..	..	..	..	..	2,003	1.1	0.49	1
1899	..	..	..	..	..	2,153	3.07	1.39	3
1900	..	..	..	..	..	2,460	3.65	1.62	4
1901	..	..	..	..	..	2,754	2.42	1.09	3
1902	..	..	..	..	..	2,885	1.46	0.69	2
1903	..	..	..	..	..	2,852	2.81	1.4	4
1904	..	..	..	..	..	3,288	2.6	1.21	4
1905	..	..	..	..	..	3,269	3.78	1.83	6
1906	..	..	..	..	..	3,692	3.46	1.62	6
1907	..	..	..	..	..	3,910	6.55	3.07	12
1908	..	..	..	..	..	3,894	2.68	1.28	5
1909	..	..	..	..	..	4,191	3.65	1.79	7
1910	..	..	..	..	..	4,599	7.28	3.55	16
1911	..	..	..	..	..	4,290	6.77	3.26	14
1912	..	..	..	..	..	4,328	4.13	2.08	9
1913	..	..	..	..	..	4,250	3.18	1.38	6
1914	..	..	..	..	..	4,734	21.53	10.35	49†
1915	..	..	..	..	..	4,156	4.07	2.16	9
1916	..	..	..	..	..	3,988	2.65	1.5	6
1917	..	..	..	..	..	3,983	1.93	1	4

\* Year of Brunner explosion.

† Year of Ralph's (Huntly) explosion.

The methods by which coal is mined, of course, influence the accident rate, and methods vary according to the nature and character of the coal-seams, the depth of the mines, and local customs. Evidence was given that the use of machines in certain New Zealand mines reduced the number of accidents considerably. Comparisons of accident rates between different countries need to be interpreted in the light of information about differences in methods of working, in intelligence and skill of miners, &c. The mere accident rates themselves may be deceptive. With this caution we quote the following table giving an international comparison from "Hoffman on Fatal Accidents in Coal-mining" (U.S.A. Bureau of Labour, 1910).

TABLE 86.—FATAL ACCIDENTS IN COAL-MINING.

Comparison of Fatal-accident Rates in Coal-mining Countries for the Period 1897 to 1906.

Country.						Total Number of Employees at Work One Year.	Fatal Accidents.	
							Number.	Rate per 1,000 Employees.
North America	..	..	..	..	..	5,179,343	16,273	3.13
Japan (1902-1906)	..	..	..	..	..	438,259	1,355	3.09
Russia, Finland (1901-1903)	..	..	..	..	..	330,147	805	2.44
Victoria	..	..	..	..	..	7,902	18	2.28
New South Wales	..	..	..	..	..	124,940	267	2.14
Prussia	..	..	..	..	..	4,389,174	9,327	2.13
France	..	..	..	..	..	1,629,177	2,944	1.81
New Zealand	..	..	..	..	..	27,268	37	1.36
Austria	..	..	..	..	..	1,186,510	1,599	1.35
United Kingdom	..	..	..	..	..	7,973,031	10,319	1.29
Queensland	..	..	..	..	..	11,714	14	1.20
Belgium	..	..	..	..	..	1,322,516	1,401	1.06
India (1898-1906)	..	..	..	..	..	790,070	676	0.86

The risk of fatal accidents in New Zealand in this period of ten years was therefore comparatively low; but during the next ten years 133 persons lost their lives by accident, more than doubling the number per 1,000 persons employed.

According to the Mines Statement for 1917, *New Zealand in recent years compares most favourably with Great Britain, which stands ahead of all other countries as regards the low proportion of fatal colliery accidents.* For comparison it may be stated that during the past four years at British collieries fatal accidents per 1,000 persons employed amounted to 1.53, 1.35, 0.73, and 1.22 respectively, and per million tons of coal raised to 4.84, 3.75, 3.64, and 4.36. The fatal-accident rate in respect of mine workers in New Zealand collieries is not greater per 1,000 employees than the corresponding rate on the railways, though it is considerably higher than that for factory workers in the Dominion.