

The figures as to the number of factories and workers employed therein do not purport to coincide with those of the Government Statistician (annual statistics of factory production), 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 might be explained that the above figures are those ascertained at registration time (April in each year), except that in order to include factories in seasonal industries which might be closed in April any new establishments opened during the year are added. The figures shown for 1938-39, therefore, chiefly represent the numbers in April, 1938.

It will be noticed that increases have again been recorded in the number of factories and in the number of factory workers, but an examination of the figures in connection with the more important trades shows that, while the factory workers have increased in some cases, there has been a decided reduction in others. For example, in trades associated with the building industry the number of factory workers has increased by 814, meat freezing 108 increase, chemical fertilizer and manure manufacturing 176 increase, motor engineering 604 increase, tinsmithing and coppersmithing 107 increase, baking 236 increase, biscuit and confectionery 186 increase, fruit-preserving and jam-making 115 increase, printing and bookbinding, &c., 258 increase, laundrywork and dyeing and cleaning 182 increase. As against these figures, however, reductions have been recorded in the following trades: Tanning and fellmongery 285 decrease, flaxmilling and rope and twine making 166 decrease, general engineering 137 decrease, coach and motor-body building 288 decrease, boot and shoe manufacturing 485 decrease, clothing-manufacturing 1,158 decrease, woollen-milling 261 decrease, sauce, pickle, and condiment making 124 decrease. In a number of the trades in which the number of factory workers have decreased there is a definite shortage of workers, particularly of female workers, and inquiries are being made into the question of employment in factories, including the needs of secondary industry as regards labour requirements, while there is also under consideration a scheme for transferring men from public and local-body works into secondary industries with a view to their being trained in the work, thereby assisting to alleviate the position so far as the shortage of skilled workers is concerned.

ACCIDENTS.

In order that they 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.

As indicated in last year's report, the accident statistics for the year ended 31st December, 1937, were not available at the date of completion of that report. Particulars of these accidents are as follows:—

The total number of reported accidents to workers in factories is 4,258 (4,027 males and 231 females). Of the total number, 145 of the accidents occurred to workers under sixteen years of age, 919 to those between sixteen and twenty, and the remaining 3,194 to those above that age. Of the 9 fatal accidents, 3 were caused by or were due to machinery. Of the total accidents, 660 were caused by or were due to machinery. The other principal causes of accidents were found to be as follows: Falls of persons (from stairs, ladders, platforms, &c.), 503; stepping on or striking against fixed objects, 222; faulty handling of tools, 1,001; handling of other objects—viz., objects dropped or tipped over, objects falling, or strain due to handling, 1,304; handling of poisonous, hot, and corrosive substances, 265; others (miscellaneous), 303; total, 4,258. Disability caused: Temporary disability, 4,122; permanent partial disability, 127. Fatalities, 9.

Information in respect of time lost in 4,045 cases shows that a total of 74,760 days were lost, or an average of 18.5 days for each worker.

The total amount of compensation paid in the 4,151 cases in respect of which the details have been secured was £55,100 18s. 2d.

For the year ended the 31st December, 1938, the total number of reported accidents to workers in factories is 4,165 (3,915 males and 250 females). Of the total number, 139 of the accidents occurred to workers under sixteen years of age, 845 to those between sixteen and twenty, and the remaining 3,181 to those above that age. Of the 9 fatal accidents, 3 were caused by or were due to machinery. Of the total accidents, 592 were caused by or were due to machinery. The other principal causes of accidents were found to be as follows: Falls of persons (from stairs, ladders, platforms, &c.), 458; stepping on or striking against fixed objects, 261; faulty handling of tools, 964; handling of other objects—viz., objects dropped or tipped over, objects falling, or strain due to handling, 1,298; handling of poisonous, hot, and corrosive substances, 248; others (miscellaneous), 344; total, 4,165. Disability caused: Temporary disability, 4,041; permanent partial disability, 115. Fatalities, 9.

Information in respect of time lost in 4,007 cases shows that a total of 75,479 days were lost, or an average of 18.8 days for each worker.

The total amount of compensation paid in the 4,118 cases in respect of which the details have been secured was £61,599 3s. 7d.

The following particulars are given of the fatal accidents that occurred during the year:—

A worker operating a concrete-pipe-moulding machine received injuries to his arm due to his being struck by a broken mould-ring. As a result of complications arising from the accident he died about a fortnight later.

A sawmill worker was engaged in oiling machinery beneath the mill when his clothing became caught up in the shafting, and he sustained fatal injuries.

A worker engaged in excavating clay at a brick and pipe works received fatal injuries as a result of being struck by a fall of clay.