

Table VII shows that the increase in the number of accidents was not evenly distributed among the causes of accidents. Four groups—vehicles, falls of persons, stepping on or striking against fixed objects, and miscellaneous—record a decrease in the number of accidents, while the increase is most marked in the fixed-machinery (19·7 per cent.) and the falling objects (13·6 per cent.) groups. (The increase of 20 per cent. in the electricity group is not significant in view of the very small number of accidents.) Time lost through accidents causing only temporary disability amounted in 1946 to 112,549 days, and compensation paid to £92,521 18s. 5d. These compare with 111,786 days and £93,966 2s. in the previous year.

It is to be emphasized that accident statistics published in this report are preliminary figures only. The final figures published in the Government Statistician's Statistical Reports do not usually show any significant change in the numbers of accidents, but the time lost through accidents, given above, relates only to those accidents where the time lost is known and has been reported. In cases of permanent or long-continued incapacity the time lost may not be known until a considerable period has elapsed. The time lost must also be estimated for fatalities. There is, then, a very great difference between the preliminary data for lost time and the figures which this will eventually reach. The following example of the differences which may appear illustrates the points above. The annual report of the Department for 1943-44 gave preliminary factory accident figures for the calendar year 1942, as follows:—

Number of accidents	..	..	..	..	7,488
Time lost	..	..	..	..	151,410 days.

The Statistical Report on Prices, &c., for 1942 gave final factory accident figures for the same year as follows:—

Number of accidents	..	..	7,494
Time lost	..	..	(a) 470,579 days; (b) 431,415 days.

The two possibilities (a) and (b) in the final figures for time lost refer to two different methods of estimating this quantity in respect of permanent disability and fatality. The former, (a), refers to a constant allowance for each case, based upon the average age at which workers meet with accidents, and (b) refers to an allowance for each case based upon the actual expectation of life of each person suffering permanent disability or death. But it will at once be apparent that both methods of adding the working-days lost in such cases result in a great increase in the final figures.

The following are brief details of the fatal factory accidents that occurred during the year:—

An electrician working on an electric switchboard was killed by shock due to electric burns, the accident apparently being due to a short circuit.

A worker was assisting to replace a belt on a moving pulley, when his clothing became entangled with the revolving shafting. He sustained a fractured skull.

Injuries received from being crushed between a building and a railway truck resulted in the death of a worker.

A flock-teasing-machine operator who had had his hands caught in the steel rollers of the machine, resulting in the amputation of four fingers of each hand, died subsequently from tetanus infection.

There were two accidents at two separate sawmills during unloading operations, a worker in each case being crushed by a rolling log. Both died from injuries received.

Another sawmill worker, aligning a fitch at a breaking-down bench, slipped and fell backwards along No. 2 skid, striking his head heavily almost directly beneath a log which was being lowered on to the skid. Death was due to a fractured skull.