

SECTION III.—ACCIDENTS.

The following is a summary of accidents in and about coal-mines during 1925, with their causes :—

	Fatal Accidents.		Serious 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 fire-damp or coal-dust ..	..	..	..	..
Falls of ground	5	5	16	16
Explosives .. .. .	..	..	2	2
Haulage	3	3	1	1
Miscellaneous—Underground .. .. .	..	..	4	4
On surface .. .. .	..	..	2	2
Totals	8	8	25	25

The fatalities being in the proportion of 1·67 per thousand persons employed, and 3·78 per million tons produced.

The following is an account of the fatal accidents.

At Shag Point Mine, on the 13th January, James Clever, 23 years of age, employed as a trucker, received a compound fracture of the left femur, as a result of which he died in Dunedin Hospital two days later. Deceased had worked only a week in the mine, and at the time of the accident was "hanging-on" at the foot of a short steep jig. He was awaiting the landing of the full race, but had not taken the precaution to stand clear. The jig-rope was held to the coupling by means of three clamps. Apparently, as a result of the sudden application of the brake the rope-clamps failed and deceased was struck by the runaway trucks. The Coroner's finding was to the effect that the death was accidental, and that there did not seem to be any negligence on the part of any one.

At Taratu Mine, on the 22nd January, James McGowan, aged 53 years, was buried by a fall of gravel in the winding-shaft, and his body was not recovered till the 24th. As a result of an uncontrollable fire in the shaft section it was decided to abandon the section and fill the shaft with gravel, tipped into the shaft at the surface. The east winding-compartment was filled to a level of about 50 ft. above the gravel in the west compartment, and at the time of the accident deceased and a miner named D. A. Jordan were engaged in removing part of the midwall in order to allow gravel to run from the east to the west winding-compartment. Three boards were removed and some of the gravel shovelled out when the gravel fell with a rush, broke the midwall above, and buried both men beneath about 12 ft. of gravel. Jordan at the time of the fall had been standing in the pumping-compartment, and the pipes and timber saved him; he was released early the following morning.

At the Liverpool State Mine, on the 28th February, John Edward Knox, a miner, was killed by a fall of roof in his working-place. Deceased and his mate had been taking a lift of a pillar, and the lift had just been holed through into the goaf above. The lift was timbered with sets over the trucking-road and a double row of props and one chock on the right-hand side next the goaf. The place was about 10 ft. high, and the roof was a fairly strong sandstone. Shortly before the accident a fall had occurred in the goaf. This had evidently weakened the roof in the lift, for it fell to a parting 7 ft. up, without any warning being given. The timber sets were all swung out rather than broken. Knox was caught by the fall and instantly killed. The Coroner in his verdict stated that all precautions had been taken to make the place safe, and that no blame was attachable to any one.

At Paparoa Mine, on the 1st August, a miner named George Robert Smith, aged 44 years, was killed by a fall in his working-place. Deceased and his mate had been engaged in breaking off a new lift in a pillar. They had retimbered the level, using a carrying-set which supported the ends of four bars. Weight coming suddenly on the timber swung one end of the carrying-set and the soft-coal roof came down and buried deceased. The inquest was held by a Coroner and jury, and a rider was added to the verdict of accidental death stating that electric safety-lamps would have given greater safety than oil safety-lamps.

At the Liverpool State Mine, on the 19th August, James Whelan, aged 60 to 65 years, was severely injured by a race of runaway trucks, and died the same day. Deceased was employed "hanging-on" at the bottom of a bank. The bank is worked by two jigs, one above the other. The empty race on the top jig became detached from the rope, and the full race broke the stop-block at the head of the bottom jig and continued on down the bottom jig, left the rails at the curve at the bottom of the bank, and knocked out the timber. Deceased was struck either by the runaway trucks or by the timber.

At the Clydevale Mine, on the 7th September, Thomas Ronayne, aged 76 years, a director of the company, was killed by falling out of a bucket on the aerial tramway. Deceased was on a visit to the mine, and, against the advice of the manager, decided to travel up to the mine on the aerial which conveys the output from the mine-mouth to the railway-siding. When half-way across deceased must accidentally have undone the clip which kept the bucket upright, with the result that he was thrown out and fell from a height of 25 ft., fracturing his skull.