

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 1937-38, therefore, chiefly represent the numbers in April, 1937.

The upward movement in the number of factories registered and in the number of factory workers, which commenced in April, 1934, was maintained during last year, there being large increases under both headings as compared with the previous year. Increases have again been recorded in coach and motor-body building, clothing and white working, motor and cycle engineering, sawmilling, and other trades associated with the building industry and the furniture trade. As anticipated in the previous report, the latest figures in the above table relating to the number of factories and the number of factory workers established a new record level. An examination of the receipts by way of registration fees during April and May, 1938, indicates that the upward movement of factory employment is still being continued.

ACCIDENTS.

The statistics in regard to accidents to workers were not available up to the date of completion of the report, and arrangements are accordingly being made for their inclusion in the next report.

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

A baker who had accidentally caught his hand in a dough-mixing machine died in hospital as a result of a clot of blood from the wound becoming lodged in the tubes leading to the lungs.

Sulphur-dust in an elevator shaft at a chemical-works became accidentally ignited, and, in endeavouring to escape, several workers were injured, while one was asphyxiated by sulphur-dioxide gas.

A ground engineer at an aerodrome was cutting the top off an empty oil-drum with an oxy-acetylene torch when an explosion occurred, the worker being killed instantly. The worker apparently omitted to "steam out" the drum to remove any inflammable gases.

A splinter of bone penetrated the finger of a freezing-worker while he was boning beef. Blood-poisoning set in, and the worker died about a fortnight after the accident.

A sawmill worker was attending to a circular saw when through some mistake the power was switched on. The resultant injuries to the worker proved fatal.

A foreman who was supervising the slipping of a scow lay face downwards on a floating punt in order to see that the vessel was sitting correctly on the packing when it suddenly moved sideways, crushing his head against the punt. The injuries sustained by him subsequently proved fatal.

A worker sustained fatal head injuries when an old petrol-tank which he was welding exploded. Apparently the tank contained petrol-vapour which ignited on the application of the welding-apparatus.

A worker in a limeworks was found lying near a crusher with head injuries which later proved fatal. It is not known how the accident occurred, but it is surmised that some limestone fell from an adjacent receiving hopper and struck him on the head.

In the following case the accident was to a person other than a "worker" within the meaning of that term as defined by the Workers' Compensation Act, 1922:—

A member of a firm of flax-mill owners was testing a scutcher when a side cheek casting broke and the arms of the scutcher struck him on the head, causing fatal injuries.

INSPECTIONS, ETC.

During the year visits of inspection to the number of 14,013 were made. Complaints were received respecting 1,801 alleged breaches of the Act, resulting in 45 prosecutions and 619 warnings. In 667 cases investigation showed that no breach had been committed, while in the remaining cases no action was considered necessary. Sixty prosecutions were instituted for breaches which were discovered by Inspectors, and warnings were given in other cases, being either first offences or of a minor nature. Convictions were secured in 81 of the 105 prosecutions; the fines totalled £95. No case calls for comment.

There were 621 requisitions served to comply with various requirements of the Act, such as for limewashing; safeguards for workers employed on machinery, &c.; sanitary conveniences; fire-escapes; renovations and structural alterations; heating-appliances; ventilation; spray-booths in duco work; first-aid appliances; and dining-rooms in the case of establishments employing over six women and girls and boys under sixteen; also provision of drinking-water.

BOYS AND GIRLS IN FACTORIES.

Certificates of Fitness issued to Boys and Girls under Sixteen Years of Age to Work in Factories.

Year.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Year.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
1916-17	1,158	1,251	2,409	1931-32	420	843	1,263
1926-27	1,199	1,547	2,746	1932-33	509	1,067	1,576
1927-28	1,030	1,614	2,644	1933-34	510	1,283	1,793
1928-29	981	1,603	2,584	1934-35	791	2,011	2,802
1929-30	1,077	1,746	2,823	1935-36	1,026	1,964	2,990
1930-31	655	1,059	1,714	1936-37	1,890	2,572	4,462
				1937-38	1,881	2,135	4,016