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Accident record on construction sites 'shameful'

By FIONA MACMAHON

THE Commissioner for Labour, Mr Tony Hammond, said yesterday that it was "shameful" that more than one in three construction workers were involved in accidents last year.

"The accident rate per thousand workers in the construction industry rose from 333 in 1987 to 370 in 1988," he said.

There were 58 fatalities last year in the construction industry, which employs about 72,000 people.

There have been 48 fatalities in the first three quarters of this year and a total of 14,686 accidents, a 0.2 per cent increase over the same period last year.

In contrast, the number of accidents in the manufacturing sector was being contained, Mr Hammond said.

He said he believed the situation could be improved

by a well-trained, and disciplined workforce with adequate safety awareness and safety knowledge, as many of the accidents were due to unsafe practices on site.

"It is for this reason that the Construction Industry Training Authority (CITA) has always stressed the importance of safety at work and has incorporated safety training into the programs for construction craftsmen and technicians."

Mr Hammond was speaking to about 900 graduates of the basic craft courses and construction supervisor trainee courses at the CITA annual speech day.

Development plans over the next decade would exert heavy pressure on the already tight labour market, Mr Hammond predicted, and he praised the authority for its plans to expand training capacity.