

Factory Disiricts and Inspectors—continued.

Blenheim, M. Scanlon.
 Gisborne, S. Moore.
 Masterton, Henry McArdle.
 Woodville, J. Treanor.
 Nelson, John Pratt.
 Hokitika, C. Fraser.
 Waimate, W. Gilbert.
 Lawrence, C. Conn.
 Ashburton, C. W. Moller.
 Ormondville, James Liddells.
 Westport, W. Emerson.
 Picton, John Jeffries.
 Marten, Alfred Morton Moon.
 Inglewood, William Henry Ryan.

Hamilton, William Murray.
 Mercer, Joshua Hutchison.
 Temuka, Thomas Bourke.
 Geraldine, William Willoughby.
 Cambridge, William Brennan.
 Malvern, Walter Henry Haddrell.
 Lincoln, John Walton.
 Rakaia, William Lewis.
 Leeston, Patrick McCormack.
 Oxford, William Henry Scott.
 Kaikoura, William Wilson Smart.
 Rangiora, Patrick Costin.
 Akaroa, Patrick Scully.

Paid Inspectors are stationed at Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Auckland.

It is gratifying to report that the Act has been met generally in a loyal and generous spirit. The majority of employers have received the suggestions of Inspectors in a manner proving that they had the interest of their employes at heart, and were desirous of doing their best to make their premises as convenient and healthful for the workpeople as they could. There were few traces of anything which could be called "sweating," in the sense in which the word is used in Great Britain. The most prolific source of discomfort arose from overcrowding, not only in the workshops but in the space for out-buildings: the narrow allotments of land in towns (often built up to the actual boundaries) being circumscribed in ground-space, and not fitted to give those free areas of space and room which decency and sanitary arrangements require. A person employing at first two or three hands is tempted, as his business grows, to crowd ten or eleven people into the workshop which accommodated a smaller number perfectly well, and is liable to neglect taking necessary precautions as to decency in providing proper accommodation for each sex, by erecting separate closets, &c. The large mills and factories are usually models of everything that should be in this respect; ample funds allow of costly appurtenances to these establishments, and the number of employes secures a publicity which renders any breach of regulations almost an impossibility. The effect of this generous treatment is shown, not only in the healthy appearance of the workpeople, but in the manner they regard the business of the firm as their own: the concessions for their benefit bearing fruit commercially in the zest and increased energy which they apply to their daily tasks.

Alterations and improvements have been made in 913 factories and workshops at the request of Inspectors.

There have been but four cases in which, after formal warning, legal proceedings have had to be taken. Penalties were inflicted in three cases, the fourth was dismissed on account of the Magistrate considering the wording of the clause too vague to apply in this instance.

Having spoken of the general acceptance of the Act, it behoves me to mention a few examples proving the necessity which existed for such an Act being brought into force. In one establishment employing over fifty women and thirty men, only one closet was provided, this being supposed to be for the use of the women. As, however, this closet could not be used without passing through the men's workshop, its value was quite nullified. For the use of the men neither closet nor urinal was supplied. I called the attention of the proprietor to these abominable facts, and to the injury certain to result to the health of his workpeople. I further added that even on the lowest, the commercial grounds, he must lose much valuable time through the hands necessarily absenting themselves. I was answered that it was "of no consequence, as the hands were on piece-work"! It is well known that in a Southern town the death of a girl was caused directly by want of proper sanitary accommodation; and doubtless others are injured more or less for life by inhuman neglect of this nature, which it would be prudery of the basest sort not to speak of, if preventible for the future. A leading clothier in one of our smaller towns employed seven girls, and had provided no closet. He informed me that no such convenience was necessary, as "one of the girls had a sister living a little way down the street, and they went there." It is needless to say that he was ordered to attend to the matter at once, and did so without loss of time. In several cases it was found that the evil arose more from thoughtlessness or carelessness in employers than from meanness in not wishing to spend a small sum of money. Thus the women's quarters or conveniences were seldom or never visited by proprietors, who, absorbed in business, dealt only with forewomen, or who, from ultra-delicacy, shrunk from inspecting every portion of their own premises. In many ways employes need protection against themselves, against their own slovenliness and neglect of healthful precautions; sometimes against a species of "larrikinism" subversive of decency.

In regard to air-space, one employer had packed seven girls into a room scarcely larger than a piano-case, and in which there were not sufficient cubic feet of air for one person to breathe healthfully. It was only by the threat of extreme penalties that any improvement was effected, the owner meeting the Inspector's demand by declaring that if molested he would discharge the girls. Better counsels prevailed: the premises in question have been altered to more suitable dimensions, so as to allow of a less vitiated atmosphere being breathed by the people through whom the proprietor's income was derived. There is too little elbow-room in many of the workshops, but generally sufficient supply of fresh air; in many cases too much air entering through broken windows and unlined walls. Although at considerable expense in some establishments, great improvements are visible in the soundness and cleanliness of workshops to-day compared with those used when the Act came into force a few months ago.

Few instances were found in which children under age were employed. In all cases of persons suspected by the Inspector of being under the limit (sixteen years) allowed to "young persons" the