

1943
NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

(REPORT OF THE)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency

REPORT

THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF LABOUR.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 10th May, 1943.

I have the honour to present herewith the fifty-second annual report of this Department for the information of His Excellency the Governor-General, and to be laid before Parliament in compliance with the Labour Department Act, 1908, and the Factories Act, 1921-22. The report covers the financial year 1st April, 1942, to 31st March, 1943.

I have, &c.,

HENRY E. MOSTON,

Secretary of Labour.

The Hon. the Minister of Labour.

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

The position as to the supply of workers has become more difficult during the year and it is now common, when an inspection is made of any large factory, for Inspectors to be advised that production is being held up, at least to a certain extent, through shortage of labour and particularly of trained hands. Supplies of materials also present problems in many industries, shortages existing because of the supplies not coming forward, of the necessity of meeting prior demands of the armed services, and of stocks being "frozen" to meet anticipated further demands for emergency purposes. It is obvious that because of extensive mobilization of both men and women the numbers employed in those avenues that are lesser in importance will fall. The tables recorded later, however, show a further increase in the number of women engaged in factory employments. This, to some extent is the result of the direction under the Man-power Regulations of women into essential undertakings. Because statistics as to the number of persons employed in factories are collected mainly in April in each year, the figures available are those of 1942, and the earlier preparation of this report means that examination of the 1943 trend has not been possible.

In the primary industries a shortage of labour, which was apparent all through the year, became serious with the onset of seasonal activities. To meet the position the temporary release of experienced workers from the armed forces was arranged, while bivouac camps were of major assistance for harvesting and similar purposes by furnishing a pool of willing, though to some extent unskilled, labour. Women are increasingly engaged on farm work, and Inspectors quote cases where womenfolk have, for example, kept large dairy herds in production with inadequate assistance.

NEW INDUSTRIES

Difficulties of supply have led to the establishment of factories for the manufacture of bituminous mastic roofing, also of macaroni and spaghetti. Dehydration plants have also been introduced, and meat, vegetables, and fruit are being dealt with this year by drying processes. Reclamation of rubber and local manufacture of rubber goods have appeared because of necessity, while many factories are now producing various types of machines and equipment to meet emergency requirements. An establishment to extract oil from linseed was recently opened, this being a further development upon the growing of linen flax mentioned in last year's report. In the sphere of primary production the extraction of phosphate deposits in Otago, treated for purposes of this report as a new industry, is of major interest.

OVERTIME

Extended hours have again been worked in many factory industries, particularly those immediately associated with the meeting of the requirements of the defence services. Because of these extended hours there have been suggestions that fatigue is beginning to make itself felt; however, while some instances of excessive hours have come under the notice of Inspectors, in no case has it been shown that there has been any detriment to health as a result of the extended hours approved by Inspectors in the case of women and boys. Extension of hours for male workers over sixteen years of age is not subject to limitation except as to the provision of meal breaks, but the statute limits the Inspector's approval to ninety hours in a year for each female worker or boy, though he may in exceptional cases arising from unforeseen circumstances permit an additional thirty hours to be worked. Further,