

problem of industrial absenteeism lies in improvements in personal contact between managements and workers, improved individual handling of cases of absenteeism, and the elimination of those conditions both within the workshop and beyond it which promote ill health, undue fatigue, lack of interest, and various personal difficulties of many sorts. This view is strongly borne out by reports from other countries and by investigations within New Zealand carried out by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

In various tramways undertakings the National Service Department has sponsored the setting-up of joint committees of workers' and management representatives which deal with all cases of absenteeism and refer to the Man-power Officer only those cases where they consider a fine to be the most appropriate method of dealing with them. These committees have been most successful in reducing the incidence of absenteeism, on the one hand, and in securing sympathetic consideration of cases of justifiable absenteeism, on the other.

(iv) *Man-power Raids*.—The very great majority of people in the Dominion have responded most willingly and loyally to the call of wartime industrial needs and to the measures of control rendered necessary. Nevertheless, there are inevitably a small number of persons who seek to evade wartime man-power obligations or who otherwise default in fulfilment of them. These consist of two main groups: persons who have failed to register for direction to work of national importance, and persons who have left essential work without consent. In order to locate such defaulters, power was taken in the Industrial Man-power Emergency Regulations 1944 for Man-power Officers and police to question persons on private premises or in any public place (theatres, billiard-rooms, golf clubs, tea-rooms, &c.) and so to check on their fulfilment of man-power obligations. Extensive raiding of such places has been carried out in the early part of 1944. The raids have been carried out tactfully and in a manner to cause the least inconvenience to the public. They have been instrumental in locating several hundred defaulters to date and have also revealed a number of cases of industrial absenteeism. The raids have been well received by the public, which has appreciated both the objective and the manner in which each raid is carried out. Reports indicate that, in addition to cases of default actually located, there has resulted from them a general improvement in the fulfilment of wartime man-power obligations.

(v) *Prosecutions*.—The Department has throughout adopted an attitude of reasonable leniency in cases of failure to comply with obligations in respect of workers and employers wherever there have been good grounds to believe that the commission of an offence arose out of a genuine misunderstanding or that there were sufficiently extenuating circumstances. Those who would advocate a policy of rigorous severity (and there are public critics who do) show little appreciation of the realities of work under wartime conditions, where pressure of work, shortness of staff, the lack of understanding of the import of regulations, and various other factors lead to the unintentional commission of minor offences by employers and where long hours of work, unfamiliar work, and personal difficulties and worries frequently bring about the commission of offences by workers which do not imply any wilful evasion of obligations. In the view of the Department penalties exist for dealing with more serious or deliberate offences and with persistent offenders, employers and workers. In all such cases the Department does not hesitate to prosecute, but it is pleasing to be able to report that, despite the fact that some 255,000 persons are subject to the control measures applying to essential industries and undertakings and that some 90,000 persons have been placed under direction, only 796 prosecutions have had to be instituted from the outset to 31st March, 1944. These have been disposed of as follows:—

Total proceedings instituted	..	..	..	..	796
Number withdrawn	..	..	..	..	136
Number convicted	..	..	..	..	520
Number dismissed	..	..	..	..	58
Adjournment or under action at date	..	..	..	..	82

(vi) *Women in the War Effort*.—The part played by women in New Zealand's war effort deserves special note. As shown in an Appendix to this report, there are 7,837 women serving in the Armed Forces, while a further 2,793 have volunteered for the Women's Land Service. In addition, there are some 75,000 women working in essential industries and a further 153,000 working in other spheres of industry. Many thousands of these women are doing men's work, keeping production and services going and holding the jobs open until the men return. Many of them are working long hours, and many are married women maintaining their homes at the same time. Women are working as van-drivers, railway porters, tram conductors, postmen, farm workers, munitions workers, and in many other operations previously performed by men. Others are working on essential military or civilian production in clothing-factories, boot-factories, woollen-mills, linen-flax factories, laundries, canneries, and many other factories, while yet others are engaged in nursing and in the essential services of providing, distributing, and serving foodstuffs both for members of the Armed Forces and for other war workers.

The influence of women on the Dominion's war effort as a whole has been greatly extended and facilitated through the close and willing co-operation of the Women's War Service Auxiliary and of various other women's organizations such as the Women's Institutes, the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union, and the Royal Society for the Welfare of Women and Children.

(vii) *Compulsory Unionism*.—In normal times the obligation is placed on an employer to see that persons employed by him belong to an appropriate industrial union of workers in all cases where compulsory union membership applies, and he is able to meet this obligation through his freedom of choice in engaging workers or by his ability to dismiss those who fail to comply. Where measures of wartime control limit the employer's action in these respects, it has been necessary to take some alternative step to ensure fulfilment of the law. This has been done by deeming every person employed in an essential undertaking or working under direction to have complied with his obligations under the compulsory-unionism law in so far as it may require him to join a union and remain a member of it. If the trade-union makes two unsuccessful written demands for payment of union fees from such a member and there is no valid ground for the worker to dispute his obligation under the compulsory-unionism law, the Man-power Officer may direct the employer to deduct the fees due from wage and pay them to the trade-union.