

- While clearing a bin a worker in a brickworks was caught by a slide of material and suffocated :
- A sawmill employee was caught up by a moving spindle and hurled to the floor. He was replacing a belt with the machinery in motion :
- An engineer at a freezing-works sustained fractures to his skull through falling from the top of a boiler. There was no evidence to show how the accident occurred :
- A worker crawled underneath the shafting of a fan as a short cut. His clothes became caught by the shafting :
- The operator of a winch was caught by the foot in the winding machinery and his left leg up to the thigh dragged in. The winch was guarded, and no explanation of the presence of the worker inside the guard could be obtained :
- A coal-trimmer stepped on to the coal, which gave way, carrying him with it. His right leg was caught by the screw of a coal-elevator. He appeared to be uninjured, but died three days later.

INSPECTIONS, ETC.

During the year, 8,011 visits of inspection were made, 540 breaches of the Act being found. Prosecutions were instituted in 3 cases and warnings given in 393. No action was considered necessary in the remaining cases. In addition, complaints were received respecting 385 alleged breaches of the Act, which, on investigation, resulted in 5 prosecutions and 148 warnings. In 89 cases it was found that no breach had been committed. Convictions were secured in 6 of the 8 prosecutions. The fines totalled £4.

There were 416 requisitions served to comply with various requirements of the Act, such as for lime-washing, safeguards for workers employed on machinery, &c., sanitation, fire-escapes, dust-extraction, renovations and structural alterations, heating-appliances, lighting, ventilation, spray-booths for duco work, first-aid appliances, dining-room accommodation, and the provision of drinking water.

BOYS AND GIRLS IN FACTORIES

With the issue of the Education (School Age) Regulations 1943 (Serial number 1943/202), every child under fifteen years of age is required to have his name enrolled on the register of some public school, secondary school, technical school, or other registered school and to attend the said school whenever it is open. These regulations operated from 1st February, 1944, and thereafter it has been an offence to employ or continue to employ any child of school age at any time within school hours or at any other time if the employment of the child would prevent or interfere with his attendance at school (Regulation 10). Children who had attained the age of fourteen years on 1st February, 1944, were exempted from the regulations, and other exemptions are in terms of section 60 of the Education Act, 1914.

These regulations affect section 27 of the Factories Act, 1921–22, which provides that a boy or girl under fourteen years of age shall not be employed except in special cases authorized in writing by the Inspector of Factories, such authorization to be given only in the case of boys or girls over fifteen years of age in respect of whom certificates of exemption have been granted under paragraph (c) of section 60 of the Education Act, 1914.

The Factories Act, 1921–22, provides that a boy or girl under sixteen years of age shall not be employed in any factory unless the occupier holds from the Inspector a certificate of fitness relating to the boy or girl. Issue of a certificate is subject to age, education, and fitness qualifications. Documentary evidence of age and education is called for, but in respect of fitness the Inspector has regard for the trade and occupation involved, including considerations as to lifting of weighty articles, the particular factory and the working-conditions therein, and the appearance and physique of the young person concerned.

The number of certificates issued in 1943–44 was 2,945 (boys, 1,480 ; girls, 1,465) ; previous year 3,263 (boys, 1,706 ; girls, 1,557).

INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE AND OTHER PROBLEMS ARISING OUT OF INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES

Oil Acne.—It is pleasing to record that the incidence of oil acne in engineering-shops has been considerably reduced. Several factories where oil acne had occurred had come under notice and were referred to in last year's report. These factories have been carefully observed since then. In one of these factories cases still occurred, notwithstanding the washing and other facilities provided. The supply of the particular cutting oil used in this unit became exhausted and, replacement being impossible, a substitute oil was used. Thereafter oil acne ceased to be a problem in this factory.

Carrot Dermatitis.—In several food-preserving factories numbers of workers were affected with a skin irritation when preparing carrots for canning. It appeared that when scraping the carrots splashes of the liquid in which the articles had been washed, together with portion of the vegetable juices, reached the workers' arms, face, and neck. Those splashes dried on the skin and set up irritation.

Welding Fumes.—Fumes from welding involving also coated welding-rods gave considerable difficulty in Auckland, particularly in confined spaces in shipbuilding and repair work. These difficulties appear to have been surmounted following attention to ventilation and exhaust factors.

Linseed-oil.—A rash incurred in a linseed-oil factory is at present receiving attention.

Dust Nuisance in Cement-works.—An exhaustive investigation was made at one works. While medical examination of a number of workers did not indicate that the dust was affecting their health adversely, the matter of improving conditions is nevertheless receiving attention.

Eye Injuries.—In one district special efforts have been made during the year to reduce the number of eye injuries in industry. Inspectors discover that the protective appliances provided are too frequently left unused. Sometimes non-use has been because of the discomfort caused by unsuitable devices, on other occasions there has been a reasonable objection to using a device used in common with other workers, but there remains a considerable number of cases of wanton neglect.