

- (e) Number of foundries which were satisfactory and where no action was necessary 18
- (f) Number of foundries at which improvements called for by the Department have been completed 28

Lead Poisoning.—Two cases were reported during the year—both workers being engaged in battery-manufacture. They received hospital treatment and upon discharge did not return to their former employment. It is not considered that the poisoning was due to any particular hazard in either of the factories concerned. In another instance the owner of a factory, upon the advice of the Department, suspended the operation of a lead process until he was in a position to provide proper facilities and suitable protective measures for the workers engaged therein.

AMENDMENT OF THE FACTORIES ACT, 1921-22

The Factories Amendment Act, 1945, had the effect of reducing to 40 hours a week and 8 hours a day the maximum ordinary working-hours for any factory employee. The amendment also requires overtime payment for work performed on Saturday where the ordinary hours were reduced by the amendment from 44 to 40 and where work was not regularly performed on seven days of the week. All awards and industrial agreements are to be read subject to the amendment, but no reduction in working-hours is to have the effect of reducing the rates of wages payable under an award or industrial agreement to any worker whose weekly hours have been reduced to 40 by the operation of the amendment. In addition, the Court of Arbitration is given power, in its discretion, to adjust the rates of wages and overtime conditions of such workers for the purpose of removing any anomalies or inequities or relieving any hardship on such workers due to such reduction in hours, having regard to—

- (a) Any particular conditions or circumstances affecting the industry or industries in which such workers are employed as compared with other industries in which the limits of ordinary working-hours have long since been reduced to 40; and
- (b) Any other relevant circumstances.

The amendment further provides that officers of the Health Department in all matters relating to the health of factory workers have the same powers of entry and inspection of factory premises as are given by the Factories Act to Inspectors of Factories. If any officer of the Health Department considers that any matter affecting the health of factory workers should be remedied but has not been as a result of co-operation between the Departments of Health and Labour, he is required to report the matter to the Head of the Health Department, who may then report it to the Secretary of Labour.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT

During the year, 9,569 inspections were made, disclosing 434 breaches of the Act. In addition, investigations were made into 301 complaints received in respect of alleged breaches. Of these, 81 were without foundation. A total of 487 warnings were issued and 52 prosecutions were instituted. Fines imposed as a result of these prosecutions totalled £111 10s. Ninety-five requisitions were served on occupiers of shops to comply with various requirements of the Act, such as heating, lighting, and sanitation.

With the cessation of hostilities and the consequent demobilization of military personnel, the inspection staff of the Department is returning to normal strength. It can be anticipated, therefore, that in the coming year there will be increased inspection visits and a fuller coverage of shops and offices. This should enable greater accuracy in the compilation of the estimate of the number of shops and the number of assistants employed therein, which is based each year on information obtained during inspection visits. From the information at present available it is estimated that throughout New Zealand there were 28,138 shops, of which 13,228 were carried on without assistants. In the shops where assistants were employed, it is estimated that 22,842 males and 29,759 females were engaged.