

DECENTRALIZATION OF INDUSTRY AND ESTABLISHMENT OF TRADING ESTATES

During the year, reports for Government consideration were submitted as the result of work done by sub-committees of the Industrial Development Committee on the subjects of encouraging the decentralization of secondary industries in New Zealand and on the practicability or otherwise of establishing trading estates in this country. Much information of value is available from reports of inquiries conducted and official action taken in the United Kingdom, but the data on which consideration was given to specific aspects of the possibilities for decentralization in New Zealand were gained from a survey conducted through the medium of a special committee of local bodies appointed by the Minister and in co-operation with the South Island Local Bodies' Association to discover details of existing facilities in various districts in labour, transport, raw materials, electric power, gas, coal, water, housing, methods of rating, industrial building, and public amenities. The possibility of establishing trading estates in this country on the lines of those existing in the United Kingdom and elsewhere is a matter of considerable interest. The Department is aware of one instance wherein a syndicate has been formed in one of our country districts now devoted solely to farming where, with the object of attracting manufacturing industries to the locality, the syndicate proposes to found a trading estate to be operated on usual joint-stock-company lines. Not only would success to this venture diversify the nature of employment available locally, but it would assist in overcoming present difficulties arising from the general shortage of factory space. Features of the development in the United Kingdom, where Government sponsorship of a number of trading estates has added impetus to their growth, are that the estate purchases the land, erects factories, and provides such facilities as roading, railway sidings, cafeteria, recreation-rooms, playing-fields, and the like for an all-in rental figure. Water, steam, electricity, and gas are charged at rates assessed on metered quantities of usage. It is an important advantage of this type of enterprise that, with no requirement to make any capital outlay for land or buildings, small manufacturers with limited financial resources are able to develop their particular skills. Moreover, the working-conditions provided include more amenities than small manufacturers may be able to afford to provide. Experience in the United Kingdom has been that trading estates are particularly suited to the development of light industries, which are a type, under present conditions, very suitable for encouragement in this country. It is apparent that the possibility should be further studied of using trading estates to achieve the ends of decentralization and improved factory conditions in New Zealand.

INFORMATION SERVICE TO INDUSTRY

Industrial technique has had tremendous importance in the economic standards of communities from earliest times, and advances in scientific knowledge and its increasing application to all phases of industry serve only to intensify that importance. It is, of course, impossible for individual persons and companies of the strength and size of the average New Zealand organization to keep abreast of information published on the extraordinarily wide range of subjects affecting industry and trade which are published in ever-growing numbers of technical books and periodicals. With realization not only of the fact that it was in the national interest to keep industry and commerce up to date in modern developments, but also of the fact that to carry on their own research was beyond the capacity of many of our units, the Department felt that useful service could be rendered if it maintained a library of relevant technical information for reference and if, at least, the "highlights" from current periodicals or other sources could be circulated to those who desired to receive them. The encouragement from manufacturers both through their organizations and individually left no doubt as to their wishes in these respects. Over the past few years there has thus been set up a library containing a useful nucleus of high-standard works and into which a wide variety of current volumes