

LECTURES

In addition to the lecturers given at the Post-graduate School for Nurses, some twenty-five other lectures were delivered during the year on industrial health matters to various bodies, including trades councils, W.E.A. classes, general practitioners, Factory Inspectors, Royal Sanitary Institute, &c. Education on industrial health matters for all groups in society is needed, and it would appear that much attention should be given to this side of the work in the Department. It should be recognized as a principle that nobody who asks for a lecture on an industrial health subject should be refused, and every encouragement should be given to Inspectors and others who may have any qualifications to talk on factory conditions to give such lectures.

A valuable addition to the lecture is the film strip, and during the year one has been made, based on photographs taken in Wellington factories, illustrating day-to-day health and safety problems which are current issues in factory life in the Dominion.

JUVENILES

The 1946 Factories Act requires that any one entering industry under the age of sixteen should have a medical certificate declaring him to be fit for work. This clause came into operation for the first time in April, 1947, and during the nine months April to December the following were examined by the factory certifying surgeons:—

Number Examined.	Number Passed as Fit.	Number Refused.	Percentage Refusals.
2,129	2,099	30	1.4

INDUSTRIAL DISEASES

It is difficult at this stage to say much about specific industrial diseases and their occurrence in New Zealand. Working-conditions in many instances are such that it is inevitable that the health of workers will be affected, but the type of training of the factory inspectorate and the machinery for notification by general practitioners is not such as to enable accurate records to be established as yet. Undoubtedly, industrial dermatitis is occurring on a fairly wide scale, and occasional cases of lead poisoning, fume fever, and chrome ulceration have been seen, but it is impossible to say how many are occurring in the Dominion. There are factors operating in this country which are likely to reduce the incidence of specific industrial syndromes. In the first place, industry is very slightly developed as yet and in this early developmental stage the division of labour is not as marked a phenomenon as it is in a highly industrialized country. This is a great safeguard to workers connected with dangerous processes, for it means that much of their time will usually be spent on work of a less dangerous character. The other factor that is undoubtedly operating as a safeguard for workers is the high labour turnover, which is specially marked in operations which are unpleasant or dangerous to health. If a man does not feel well at his job to-day, there is every encouragement for him to throw it up, for there is no scarcity of other work where he calculates he may feel better. Thus, talking recently to an employer who had a large spray-painting shop where conditions were far from healthy, he agreed it was unusual for any worker to stay on the job longer than three months. It may be safely assumed that if industrialization develops and labour becomes more stable, the incidence of ill health directly attributable to the nature of the industrial process will become far commoner in New Zealand, unless factory standards are materially raised.