

before will be possible next year. In the year under review a complete coverage was accomplished in six districts, and 72 to 97 per cent. coverage in ten other districts. Table XXVII shows the great increase in requisitions served by Inspectors. It is considered that an energetic inspection policy will reduce the volume of complaints and breaches and will lead to a better understanding of and compliance with the provisions of the Act. Inspections are being set at a high standard, with particular attention to the safety, health, and welfare of workers, which are regarded as matters of paramount importance. For details of breaches, warnings, complaints, &c., see Tables XXII and XXIII of the Appendix.

(b) *Hygiene, Health, and Welfare in Factories*

(1) In 1944 Dr. J. M. Davidson, M.D., D.P.H., of Ministry of Labour and National Service, London, undertook a representative survey of conditions in New Zealand industry and presented a special report to the Health Department. He said that "an effort should be made to raise the general hygienic and æsthetic standards in factories throughout New Zealand to a level consonant with what is best in current practice elsewhere, to provide greater safety from accidents, and to improve in particular the conditions under which young persons are employed in factories." A large proportion of the new or extended provisions of the Factories Act, 1946, which was based on the British Act of 1937, was designed to assist in achieving these objects, and since the end of the war increasing attention has been given by Inspectors to matters of welfare, hygiene, and general working conditions. It has been noted, also, that many factory managements are alert to these factors, and that, in addition to co-operating very willingly with the Department and promptly endeavouring to comply with requisitions for improvements, they have in many cases voluntarily undertaken alterations with a view to advancing the welfare of their employees, and incidentally of holding and attracting labour. Many employees appreciate fully the importance of a good working environment in promoting satisfactory employer-employee relations, increasing efficiency and output, and creating in employees pride in their work and loyalty to the firm.

(2) *Conditions in New and Old Factories.*—While there is no requirement in the Factories Act that plans of new factories are to be submitted to the Department for checking in regard to compliance with the Act, managements are encouraged to do so, and over seventy plans were submitted during the year. In a number of cases changes in plans in relation to amenities were made on the Department's advice. Architects and ventilating engineers frequently consult the Department concerning proposed new factories and alterations or additions to existing plants. Most modern factories that are being erected contain first-class facilities for the staff, with a standard much higher than the minimum provisions of the Factories Act. Features of some new factory plans submitted include circular wash-troughs, showers, canteens, first-class rest-rooms for women, ambulance rooms, several swimming-baths, and steam heating-pipes set in the concrete floor. An increasing number of factory occupiers are proud of their premises. On the other hand, many older factories are located in unsuitable buildings which cannot be lifted to a high standard without considerable alteration and expense. A number of small new factories have been set up in existing old buildings of an unsuitable type with poor amenities. In some cases registration has had to be withheld. The greatest problem in regard to working conditions is in the small factories, and as these constitute over 90 per cent. of factory premises in New Zealand they will require continuing attention. Many with limited capital cannot afford the extensive alterations required, but would willingly transfer to better accommodation if it were available. Nevertheless, too many have taken existing conditions for granted and have failed to realize the substantial improvements that could be effected at little cost by attention to lighting, heating, interior painting, general cleanliness, good house-keeping, and ventilation. These problems are particularly noted in the larger centres.