

A worker in a meat-freezing works slipped into a trough of hot water which had been left uncovered. He was severely scalded, and died three days later.

A worker in a flock-factory suffered injuries as the result of an explosion that occurred while he was testing a rag-teasing machine which had just been converted so as to be suitable for flax and sacking pulping.

While passing from the milling-room to a grain-store through a doorway fitted with a concrete sloping runway a worker slipped and struck the back of his head on the floor.

A worker on the breaking-down bench at a sawmill came into contact with a saw under circumstances which, owing to the absence of eye witnesses, are not known. He suffered a severe cut across the back which almost severed the spinal column, and died without regaining consciousness. The saw was adequately guarded.

#### INSPECTIONS, ETC.

During the year visits of inspection to the number of 13,678 were made. Complaints were received respecting 376 alleged breaches of the Act, resulting in 12 prosecutions and 208 warnings. In 98 cases investigation showed that no breach had been committed, while in the remaining cases no action was considered necessary. Eight prosecutions were instituted for breaches which were discovered by Inspectors, and warnings were given in other cases, being either first offences or of a minor nature. Convictions were secured in 14 of the 20 prosecutions; the fines totalled £24 10s. No case calls for comment.

There were 623 requisitions served to comply with various requirements of the Act, such as for lime-washing, safeguards for workers employed on machinery, &c., sanitary conveniences, fire-escapes, renovations and structural alterations, heating-appliances, lighting, ventilation, spray-booths in duco work, first-aid appliances, and dining-rooms in the case of establishments employing over six women and girls and boys under sixteen; also provision of drinking-water.

#### BOYS AND GIRLS IN FACTORIES.

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. Certificates to the number of 4,199 (previous year, 4,546) were issued during the year (boys 2,119 and girls 2,080). Of the certificates issued, 187 were for boys and 253 for girls under fourteen years of age, while the industries principally affected were—Biscuit and confectionery manufacturing; boot, shoe, and slipper manufacturing; clothing-manufacturing; engineering and metal trades; furniture-manufacturing; printing and bookbinding, &c.; woollen-milling, &c.

#### LEAD PROCESSES.

In last year's report mention was made of proposed regulations to cover lead processes in factories where electric accumulators are manufactured. These were issued as the Accumulator (Lead Process) Regulations 1940 (Serial number 1940/212). Inspections under these regulations and the Spray Painting Regulations 1940 are proceeding, and Inspectors report that, due to difficulties in securing supplies for ventilating-apparatus, progress on the part of employers is not all that could be desired. As the result of 101 inspections in the Wellington metropolitan area between July, 1940, and March, 1941, alterations were required in 23 cases, new booths were required in 23 cases, while only 7 booths, other than those dealing only with hand polishing, were satisfactory.

#### SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

The Department has no accurate record as to the number of shops and the number of assistants employed therein, but from the information available it is estimated that there were during the year 29,607 shops throughout New Zealand, of which 14,551 (approximately one-half) were carried on without assistants. In the shops with assistants it is estimated there were employed 26,718 males and 26,743 females.

During the year visits of inspection of shops to the number of 20,345 were made. The Department also made 1,712 visits of inspection of offices, but the information so far available is insufficient to enable it to make an accurate estimate regarding the number of offices in the Dominion and of assistants employed therein.

Prosecutions numbered 203 (employers, 195; workers, 8); convictions were obtained in 192 cases. A number of cases were withdrawn; fines totalled £191 6s. Of the prosecutions, 126 were for offences regarding the closing-hours of shops in the evenings or on the statutory half-holiday.

Complaints were received respecting 492 alleged breaches of the Act, resulting in 99 prosecutions and 237 warnings. In 133 cases investigations showed that no breach had been committed, while in the remaining cases no action was considered necessary. One hundred and four prosecutions were instituted for breaches which were discovered by Inspectors, and warnings were given in other cases, being either first offences or of a minor nature.

One hundred and fifty-eight requisitions were served on occupiers of shops to comply with various requirements of the Act, such as for sanitary conveniences, heating-appliances, lunch-rooms, seating or rest-room accommodation, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness, and partitions, including separate entrances.