

(5) JUVENILES

The number of certificates of fitness issued to young persons to work in factories increased during the year. The total number of such certificates issued in the year 1945-46 was 1,822, a figure reached after a steady decline for a number of years, due to the raising of the school leaving age. The total for the year 1946-47 was 2,227, made up as follows :—

				Number of Certificates issued to Persons aged,		Totals.
				14 and under 15.	15 and under 16.	
Boys	..	..	..	25	1,138	1,163
Girls	..	..	..	21	1,043	1,064
Totals	..	..	..	46	2,181	2,227

The increase is no doubt accounted for, first, by the renewal of the annual inflow of young people previously partially blocked by the raising of the school leaving age, and, secondly, to the fact that it seems likely that factory industries have taken more of the annual inflow proportionately than has been usual. If, from the total of 2,227, the number of certificates issued for the period of the school holidays (189) is deducted, the remainder, 2,038, represents an increase of nearly 12 per cent. over the previous year.

(6) HYGIENE, HEALTH, AND WELFARE CONDITIONS

There is evident throughout the country a fuller appreciation of the fact that better working-conditions make for more and better work. How much of this marked improvement in factory conditions is due to a new attitude and how much is due to the necessity, in the present state of the labour market of providing attractions to workers, it is impossible to assess, but both are factors making for change. So, too, are the comprehensive provisions of the Factories Act, 1946. A full implementation of this enactment must come gradually, but the Department is requiring conformity with the minimum of delay. Shortages of building materials, of heating, ventilating, and lighting equipment are seriously handicapping the efforts of many employers to provide new premises and effect improvements to old ones. There is little doubt that the marked improvements being made would be greatly accelerated if materials and labour were readily available.

It is considered by the Department that a healthier and more pleasant working environment is an essential part of the fostering of harmonious relationships in industry and a factor making for industrial peace. It is also true that better work-places increase the quantity and quality of work, and will help New Zealand to overcome its supply problems. To these ends the hygiene and welfare sections of the Factories Act are to be given the greatest possible attention. During the year 881 requisitions for improvements were made under the old Factories Act (see Table XXII), compared with 671 in the previous year.

(7) "OUTWORK"

Section 39 of the Factories Act, 1946, "provisions as to work let out to be done elsewhere than in factories," replaces section 30 of the Factories Act, 1921-22 (as amended in 1936), a section designed for "the better suppression of what is commonly known as the 'sweating evil.'" The 1946 Act has extended the regulation of this type of work, and it is significant that the word "sweating" has disappeared from the statute, after having been written into it since 1901. It may be appropriate at this juncture to trace its history.