

In the past year, workers subject to the danger of lead poisoning have been chosen as a group for special supervision. They are already covered by regulations under the Health Act, 1920. Two meetings were held during the year in Wellington with local manufacturers of batteries and paint at which these regulations were discussed and proposals put forward by the Division for carrying them out more effectively than has been done in the past. The industrial nurses have been specially trained in doing the blood examinations that are required by the regulations, and during the year 924 of these examinations were made in the Wellington and Lower Hutt districts. Certain men employed in battery-manufacture, paint-manufacture, and on lead-recovery furnaces were examined at monthly intervals. A few others have been examined at longer periods in printing-works, on solder-burnishing in motor assembly, lead-burning in leaded-window making, and one or two in other industries. From these examinations, 33 men were found showing stipple cell counts of 2,000 or more per million red blood cells and were temporarily transferred to other positions where the risk of lead absorption was considered to be less. The majority of these counts occurred in men employed on reclaiming-furnaces and in the manufacture of batteries. Actual notifications of lead poisoning in the area covered were 3, and these men were employed in—

- (a) Manufacture of paint where dry white lead was used.
- (b) Pasting department in manufacture of batteries.
- (c) Reclaiming-furnace.

There is little doubt that further cases of lead poisoning have occurred of which the Department has not been notified. Advice and assistance has been given to managements and workers on measures to control the lead hazard and lessen the risk of absorption. During 1949 it is hoped that this supervision of lead-workers will be extended to the rest of the country.

Another group which it is proposed to supervise in the future is that of workers in electroplating establishments, where a number of dangerous substances are handled. The industrial nurses carried out a detailed survey of these establishments in the Wellington and Lower Hutt area during the year and a number of cases of dermatitis and several cases of chrome ulceration were discovered. Standards in 50 per cent. of these establishments were low.

(4) Examination of Juveniles

The year 1948 was the first full year in which section 37 of the Factories Act, 1946, was in force. This section requires that any one entering industry under the age of sixteen shall have a medical certificate declaring him to be fit for the work to be undertaken and requires a re-examination at the age of sixteen. The following table shows the numbers examined by the Certifying Factory Medical Officers during the year, compared with the figures for nine months of 1947 :—

—	Number Examined.	Number Passed as Fit.	Number Rejected.	Percentage Rejections.
1947 (April–December) ..	2,129	2,099	30	1·4
1948	2,971	2,934	37	1·2

Of the total rejected in 1948, 4 are shown as being deferred only and 2 of the rejects are reported as having been accepted later. The most common reasons for rejection are defective vision (9), chest conditions (9), and skin conditions (5).