

and 38,851 females. An interesting feature is the increase in the number of female workers. The number of females employed in factories reached a peak figure of 39,042 in 1945, dropped sharply in the following year to 37,663, and then declined gradually to 36,336 at 31st March, 1949. The recent increase is partly a result of new factories being started in the smaller towns. Government factories are not included in the above figures, reference to them being made elsewhere in the report.

(2) Factory inspections during the year under review totalled 15,422, as compared with 13,037 in the previous year.

(3) During the course of inspections matters affecting the health, safety, and welfare of workers are regarded as of paramount importance. Working-conditions and amenities in factories may be said to be improving, but despite the fact that many employers are very willing to effect improvements the matter is still dependent on the availability of building-materials and labour. With improved supply, the Department is insisting on fuller compliance with the requirements of the Act regarding accommodation and amenities.

(4) Consideration is being given to the question of amenities provided for workers engaged on "outside" undertakings with a view to seeing whether some suitable standard can be determined. At present some provision is made for these workers in various awards, but, in the main, the amenities are considerably below the requirements in respect of factory workers. Circumstances vary considerably, however, and the introduction of one set of conditions for universal adoption presents difficulties.

(5) The establishment within the Health Department of an Industrial Hygiene Division in 1947 and the appointment of District Industrial Medical Officers has been of immense value to the Department of Labour and Employment. There is the fullest co-operation between the officers of the two Departments and no overlapping of activity.

(6) The extent and effects of industrial accidents are not fully appreciated by the general public. The time lost through accidents is considerably greater than is generally realized. This reflects itself in lowered production, which in these times of acute shortages has some effect on the national economy. The ultimate effect is dearer consumer goods, not to mention the reduced earning-power of the individual worker concerned. This is quite apart from the toll in human lives and suffering. In 1947, 1,056,222 days were lost through industrial accidents. This figure, however, does not include time lost in such industries as agricultural and pastoral work, transport (excluding railways), building and construction (apart from public works and that within the scope of the Scaffolding and Excavation Act), and many others. The Department is, therefore, paying increasing attention to this problem and is endeavouring by various means to promote a sense of safety-consciousness in industry. Prevention of accidents is to the mutual advantage of both employers and workers.

(7) During the year under review the Department arranged with the Order of St. John for a number of classes in first-aid training for bush and sawmill workers. These have proved to be very successful, and the Dominion executive of the Order of St. John proposes to extend the service to the whole of the sawmilling industry in New Zealand.

(8) Industrial disturbances received considerable publicity during the year under review, but collectively they were not exceptional when compared with previous years or disputes in other countries. There were 113 stoppages during the year as compared with 112 for the previous year. They were localized and mostly of very short duration. A number were merely unauthorized stop-work meetings of workers. Conciliation Commissioners brought the parties to complete agreement in 107 cases as compared with 131 in the previous year. In only one case was no agreement reached. Meetings of disputes committees set up under the provisions of awards numbered 33, as compared with 24 in the previous year.