BOOK REVIEWS

ANNUAL REPORT, H.M. CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES FOR YEAR 1942

The Chief Inspector, Sir A. W. Garrett, states that from his point of view the outstanding factor of the year 1942 has been the growing importance of the work of women in factories. The new type of women coming into industry for the first time, and the interest of women generally throughout the country, has led to a remarkable stimulation of public opinion for better factory working conditions.

Other matters occupying the attention of Factory Inspectors have been overcrowding, ventilation, lighting, the provision of amenities in buildings never designed for factory purposes, the health problems of luminising * and the risks of overexposure. Pressure of space has required many subjects to be dealt with only in brief, or even omitted, and it has again been found impossible to include the usual statistical tables.

Accident Prevention

During 1942 the total number of reportable accidents increased, but fatal accidents showed a drop from 1646 in 1941 to 1363. The total figures, including fatal cases, are given in the following tables:

REPORTABLE ACCIDENTS (FATAL AND NON-FATAL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Adult Males</th>
<th>Adult Females</th>
<th>Male Young Persons</th>
<th>Female Young Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>134,752</td>
<td>14,626</td>
<td>22,922</td>
<td>7,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>146,417</td>
<td>17,029</td>
<td>23,364</td>
<td>7,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>173,228</td>
<td>23,766</td>
<td>26,492</td>
<td>8,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>191,343</td>
<td>42,857</td>
<td>27,757</td>
<td>9,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>203,865</td>
<td>71,244</td>
<td>29,028</td>
<td>10,493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage increase over 1942 over 1938: 51% 389% 27% 34%

Amongst the causes of the increase as a whole are: the marked increase in employment of women and girls in the accident-producing industries; rapid acceleration of production combined with increased war weariness; increased demands on supervising staffs; the increasing age of male workers employed; less maintenance staff; and an increase in sickness rates.

Industrial Health

Dr. E. R. A. Mereweather prefaces his section of the Report with the observation that because of the marked increase in the national effort we might look for evidence of lowered vitality accompanied by an increase in industrial sickness. In his view, however, no such evidence is forthcoming; but the importance of further investigations into minor non-disabling sickness is stressed.

At the end of 1942 there were approximately 850 medical officers employed in factories, just under 19 per cent. being whole time, and approximately 7 per cent. were women. At the same time there were roughly 4000 hospital-trained nurses. This figure has risen (September, 1943) to about 6000, of whom over 63 per cent. are State registered.**

In connection with medical supervision tribute is paid to the medical service of the Ministry of Supply, which has been responsible for maintaining the health of the largest group of workers in this country under one management.

There was a slight rise in the cases of lead poisoning notified in 1942 as compared with 1941, which was the lowest figure so far recorded.

The incidence of T.N.T. toxic jaundice in this war is only approximately 19 per cent. of that in the last war, in spite of greater production. The improvement continues.

There was a further reduction in the number of notified cases of epitheliomatous ulceration—113 (8 fatal) as compared with 128 (11 fatal) in 1941.

The number of cases of chrome ulceration was 89 as compared with 103 in 1941.

The reported cases of gassing show a slight reduction on the figures for 1941, being 776 as compared with 782; 220 of these were due to nitrous fumes. The number of cases which proved fatal were 25 as against 41 in 1941.

Dr. Mereweather finally refers to the work of his predecessor, Dr. J. C. Bridge, who had retired from the post of Senior Medical Inspector in December, 1942, after holding it for 16 years. The promotion of industrial health in this country had been in a large measure due to his initiative and foresight in detecting matters potentially harmful to health, in particular the pneumoconioses, toxic solvents, and the effects of radio-active substances.

Hours of Employment

The work of controlling the hours of employment of women and young persons had been a major responsibility of the Factory Department. In the flour-milling industry a new General Order was made in view of the need for shift working by women and young persons over 16 in the increasing number of cases in which they were being substituted for men in this industry. The Hours of Day Work in Factories Order was issued early in the year to allow employment beyond 48 hours up to a maximum of 55 hours in certain industries. Under the General Emergency Order for Engineering the number of permissions to increase hours showed a considerable increase over 1941. At the end of 1942 permissions were in force in 13,256 factories as compared with 9129 at the beginning of the year.

The tendency during the year was towards the reduction of the weekly hours, not only of women and young persons, but of adult men whose hours are not controlled by the Factories Act. An outstanding feature has been the increase in the number of part-time workers, the majority of whom are women with household responsibilities and * retired * men and women who have come back to work for the period of the war.

Canteens

There has been a remarkable growth both in the number of canteens in operation at factories and in the value and efficiency of service given in them. The

* S. R. O., 1942, No. 203, and 1943, No. 1053.
General practitioners and industrial medical officers were invited to refer for further investigation young workers about whose health they were concerned. In its early stages the experiment was confined to workers under 25 years of age and to the densely populated Clydeside area. Patients so referred were examined by consultants and admitted to E.M.S. and hospitals for further investigation where necessary. Patients requiring convalescence to prevent breakdown were sent to one of the country houses being used as auxiliary hospitals in the Emergency Hospital Scheme.

Many cases were found to be suffering from conditions of debility and vague ill-health that so severely prejudice well-being and working efficiency without necessarily causing complete breakdown and absence from work.

The experiment has been a great success. In a year it had dealt with some 1400 young people, and then was extended to cover workers of all ages in the entire Scottish industrial belt. By the end of June, 1943, 4126 cases had been dealt with.

The following considerations emerge from a review of the scheme: (1) The need for such facilities. (2) Too many workers with fatigue carry on until unfit for work and the period of incapacity is therefore prolonged. (3) Much of the vague ill-health was due to long hours of work, travelling difficulties and inappropriate diet. (4) The vast majority of patients sent for convalescence benefited by the rest and change provided. (5) Removal of fear of disease by complete medical overhaul expedited recovery. Hospital reports must be of value to general practitioners. (7) The number of cases with early organic diseases was small. (8) It was not easy to arouse enthusiasm for a scheme so essentially preventive in its approach.

3. Socio-Industrial Problems following Discharge from the Services

A preliminary survey in 1941 of 300 men and women invalided out of the Services had shown that, left to themselves, these people fared badly socially, medically and in relation to work. The majority required medical care, and six months after discharge 27 per cent. were still unemployed. Of those in employment only one-third had gone back to their old work.

In 1942 a more extensive follow-up of 1000 consecutive cases was carried out, based on the Interim Scheme of the Ministry of Labour for the training of the disabled. Some facts elicited were as follows: 637 of the men (and women) required care from their own doctors and 153 required hospital treatment; 161 were unemployed; 389 had gone back to their own work; 382 had taken up new work without training; and 43 with training; 257 returned to their old employer, some to do lighter work; 256 made false starts at work at which they were unable to continue; 360 reported 'difficulties' at work; and in 188 cases it was found necessary to take serious exception to the nature of the work done, for medical reasons.

4. The Gleneagles Fitness Centre for Miners

This is an experiment in rehabilitation. At the request of the Ministry of Fuel and Power and the Miners' Welfare Commission, part of Gleneagles Hospital (previously Gleneagles Hotel, converted to an E.M.S. hospital since 1939) was made available at the beginning of 1943 for use as a Fitness Centre for miners. The aim of this centre is to get sick and injured miners back to their work in the pits at the earliest possible moment. It provides physo-therapy, occupational therapy, remedial exercises, and physical training in a residential centre with good recreational facilities.

The Report states that it is too early to assess the value of this work, but the following results were obtained during the first six months: 390 applications for admission were received; 32 were refused as unsuitable and 24 after being accepted did not turn up; 314 cases were admitted, 89 medical and 225 surgical. Of the 184 that were discharged during this period, 111 were