

INTRODUCTORY.

It is now four years and a half since the Industrial Efficiency Act was introduced and the Bureau of Industry commenced to function, and during that time a great deal has been done to achieve the purpose for which the Act was devised—namely, the further development and consolidation of the economic and industrial structure of the Dominion. During the past twelve months considerable progress has been made in planning under the Act, a phase of the Bureau's activities which hitherto, although given considerable thought by members, had not been brought to function with the exception of the pharmacy and flax (phormium) industries. It is significant that during the last year leading industrialists have expressed keen desire to avail themselves of industrial planning under the Act, and, indeed, it is in this connection that most progress by the Bureau of Industry has been made during the past year.

In the 1940 annual report the hope was expressed that finality in regard to a number of plans would rank as one of the achievements of the following year, and while it would seem at first that this hope was not entirely fulfilled, yet on closer inspection it will be found that a great deal has been achieved in exploring a ready method for the introduction of plans for all the industries that are licensed under the Act.

During the year the Licensed Industries General Regulations were passed and those regulations are applicable to all industries licensed under the Act, and are designed for the more efficient planning of industry with particular reference to the activities of an industrial committee appointed under a plan. Parts II and III of the Licensed Industries General Regulations are applicable only where an industrial plan has been formulated under the Act. The regulations as a whole provide, briefly, for the procedure governing the deliberations of an industrial committee where such has been appointed; such conditions as may attach to any license; the procedure to be followed in making application for licenses, and the lodgment of appeals and the payment of annual license fees and levies. It is significant to note that moneys paid in respect of any industry can be used for legitimate expenses in that industry only, and any surplus moneys must be held for the use of the industries concerned or refunded on a basis determined by the Hon. the Minister of Industries and Commerce.

The introduction of the footwear plan, with the setting-up of the appropriate industrial committee for the industry, marks the commencement of a new era in the industrial development of the Dominion—a development of industry along systematic organized lines of self-government to provide for the elimination of waste, the application of efficient methods of co-ordination in production and distribution, the encouragement of scientific and industrial research, the formulation of standard specifications, standard trade descriptions and allied matters, the development or use of facilities or schemes for the training of workers, the formulation of ways and means of improving the environment and amenities of factory premises, and the promotion of schemes of social welfare and general betterment of persons engaged in industry. At the present time in no less than five industries plans have been formulated and representatives of the Bureau have met representatives of the industries concerned with a view to showing the industry the benefits that can be achieved under a system of self-government of industry, and it is pleasing to note that in all cases the wish has been expressed by the representatives of the industry concerned that the plan be proceeded with. Indeed, even as early as two days after the close of the current year (2nd May), the Minister has approved of notification of a provisional plan (agreed to by a representative committee of the units concerned) for the electric-range-manufacturing industry, and it is anticipated that the results of the voting on the plan will be known even before this report is published.

So far as licensing is concerned, during the year four industries have been brought within the provisions of the Act. These are the manufacture of gut, of macaroni, of salt, and the refining of used oil. The first of these is now well established, while those of macaroni and salt it is hoped will be commenced in the not too distant future. In the case of the refining of used lubricating-oil, this was brought within the scope of the Act in an endeavour to prevent the wastage of the valuable used oil which has occurred in the past. The licensing of this industry serves as an illustration of the efforts of the Bureau to assist the community in the elimination of waste in wartime and the subsequent adoption of more efficient methods for its production and distribution.

An innovation, so far as the work of the Bureau is concerned, has been the application of section 23 of the Act to the industry of the retail sale of fresh fruit and vegetables. In accordance with the provisions of this section, all persons commencing in the industry are required to give to the Bureau one month's notice of their intention to do so. The adoption of such a course was considered necessary in order that a careful watch could be kept on conditions ruling in the industry, particularly in regard to the effect of the introduction of any new units.

In all the Bureau's deliberations throughout the year connected particularly with industrial plans invaluable assistance has been rendered by the New Zealand Manufacturers' Federation, and to this body the Bureau is much indebted. As in past years, the federation and its general secretary have been extremely helpful in the negotiations of the Bureau with the industrial groups linked with the federation, but in this particular year the assistance rendered has been of an especially generous nature. With the interest displayed by leading business men in the affairs of the Bureau, as evidenced by the activities of the federation, the Bureau can look to the future with every confidence.

MEETINGS OF BUREAU.

During the twelve months ended 30th April, 1941, the Bureau of Industry met fifty-three times, usually each Monday afternoon. The Executive of the Bureau also met on a number of occasions, mainly for the purpose of giving consideration to matters which required urgent attention or for the purpose of meeting representatives of industries desiring licensing or who wished to discuss with the Bureau the formulation of industrial plans.