

The Inspectors have been instructed to permit a variation from the prescribed or standard weight or measure of any one package up to 5 per cent., provided that the average of six similar packages, including the one that is deficient, is correct. This instruction is based upon an existing regulation under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act.

Before being adopted the regulations were very carefully considered, and opportunity was given to traders, scale-manufacturers, and others concerned to make any representations. The regulations are based generally on those in force in New South Wales. In addition to the matters already mentioned they provide for specifications of various types of weighing and measuring appliances in order to maintain accuracy; tables of maximum errors permitted in weighing and measuring appliances; and the method of marking of the net weight or measure on packed goods.

A little difficulty occurred in respect to the marking of some articles which were packed in the United States containing that country's standard weight or measure and marked accordingly. New Zealand agents have, however, quickly made arrangements to re-mark existing stocks, generally by means of stickers, and fresh shipments will be correctly marked. In the case of articles such as paints and lacquers, many of which are imported from the United States and which will be required under the new Act and regulations to be sold by specified standard weight or measure, a period has, as already mentioned, been allowed to enable traders to bring the goods into line with the regulations.

The regulations applying to the sale of coal, coke, and firewood are the same as before, excepting that coal sold by retail must now be in quantities of 1 cwt. or $1\frac{3}{4}$ cwt. (viz., twelve bags to the ton) or multiples thereof: these are the usual quantities in which coal is sold. Provision is made, however, for the sale of quantities less than 1 cwt. if sold and delivered to the purchaser on the premises of the seller: this will permit of the sale of coal by 1s. or 2s. worth to any person, a practice that already exists in many towns.

Last year the British Parliament also passed legislation requiring the correct weight or measure of articles of food sold by retail to be given. Hitherto, with the exception of several articles of food such as bread, tea, &c., and also coal, which were provided for by war legislation, the law in Britain has not made it an offence to sell short weight or measure. The new Sale of Food (Weights and Measures) Act, 1926, requires the correct weight or measure of various articles of food to be given, but, except in respect to prepacked articles of food, applies only to retail dealings.

NIGHT BAKING.

The question of the abolition of night work in the bakery trade has received much attention during recent years in many countries.

In New Zealand the hours of employees in bakehouses are at present fixed by awards of the Court of Arbitration under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the commencing-hour in the principal centres being 4 a.m., except that 3 a.m. may be the starting-hour where employers have country deliveries. Any work performed earlier than the above hours must be paid for at double ordinary-time rate of wages. In towns having a population of less than 1,500 persons the hours of work may be fixed by the employers according to the requirements of their particular businesses. The Act does not give jurisdiction, however, to control the hours at which the proprietors themselves may work, and the operatives' unions contend that, on account of competition between the proprietors who employ labour and those who perform their own work, the law should cover both employers and workers, and so enable more satisfactory hours of employment to be fixed. This would necessitate special legislation. There is serious conflict of opinion, too, on the general question, employers on the one hand contending that the prohibition of night baking would interfere with the present method of delivering bread on the same day that it is baked, while on the other hand it is contended by the operatives' unions that it is unnecessary to commence work before 6 a.m., and that night work is prejudicial to the health of the workers.

The New South Wales Parliament passed a Day Baking Act last year prohibiting any person exercising or employed in the calling or trade of a baker from making or baking for sale any bread between the hours of 6 o'clock in the evening and 5.30 in the morning of the following day. The manufacture of pastry is also prohibited between those hours.

LEAD POISONING.

This question has received further attention during the year. The regulations issued in August, 1925, for the protection of persons employed in lead processes (in factories) and in the use of lead paints have worked smoothly, and are reported to be generally observed. In conjunction with officers of the Health Department, inspections have been made of all premises where lead processes are carried on. The premises used are on the whole satisfactory and well lighted and ventilated. The machines used for grinding and mixing lead products are of modern type, and are constructed so as to be practically dust-proof.

Inspections have been made from time to time of stocks of paint held by dealers, in order to ascertain that all paints in receptacles containing more than 5 per cent. of soluble lead are properly labelled as required by the regulations.

The practice of sandpapering painted surfaces, known as "dry rubbing-down," is now abolished.

In conjunction with the Medical Officer of the Health Department, investigations have been made during the year into a paint apparatus known as a spraying or atomizer painting-apparatus which is mainly used in motor-body and coach building factories. It is not considered necessary to recommend