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FACTORIES

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES FOR THE YEAR 1951

Presented by the Minister of Labour and National Service to Parliament
by Command of Her Majesty

March 1953

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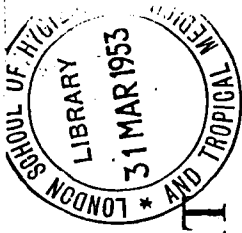
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ANNUAL REPORT

To the Right Honourable SIR WALTER MONCKTON, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., Q.C.,
M.C., M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.

SIR,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the work of the Factory Department for the year, 1951. This mid-century year is a good point for surveying the changes in the industrial picture, in so far as safety, health and welfare are concerned, over the past 50 years. The year 1901 provides a particularly suitable starting point for such a brief historical survey, as in that year the great consolidating Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, was passed; since then there has been only one major revision of the law combined with consolidation — the Factories Act, 1937 — although Regulations and Welfare Orders have grown at quite a rapid pace. The Factory Inspector has his own particular side line view of industry, but his work carries him into all kinds of industrial premises, so that while this brief survey cannot claim to be even a synopsis of the industrial history of the times, it may at least throw some light on certain aspects of industrial development during the period.

Inspectors in selected districts have made reports on the changes in their areas or in some special trades connected with it, with particular attention to the great overriding principles of Factory legislation. In some places they have been assisted by the memories of stalwarts, both employers and employed, still at work, who have seen the whole 50 years pass by in the same factory. This report, then, is not based on a central standpoint, but on information from the circumference.

The 50 years have included some years of intermittently prosperous peace, two great wars, with all their additional strain on the working population, but withal great compensatory social advances, the depth of slump and depression between the wars, shortage of labour and the struggle for exports after 1945. In all branches of the national life great social changes have taken place and all have had their effect on conditions within the factories, although many reports agree that the most striking changes have come during the last 10 years of the period.

During the 50 years many shifts in industrial location have taken place. Whilst the great basic industries have remained more or less where they were, some local centres have dried up. Nothing but slag heaps and rubbish remain of the world's greatest iron works of Merthyr and Dowlais, and many small iron works have disappeared from the Black Country and from Lancashire. The great jetty built on the Thames for the Thunderer warship is now used for the export of motor cars. On the other hand, vast new industries have been built up, some scattered about the country and some in defined areas. Partly by natural development and partly as planned policy to offset unemployment or to counteract the too great dependence on single industries employing

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