

the mere business of getting enough food to eat, clothes to put on our backs, and shelter to live in, occupies less and less of our time, so the need increases for cultivating the power to use spare energies constructively, to occupy ourselves in such a way as to promote the growth of that part of ourselves which is not concerned with the purely material side of existence. The unemployment crisis in Great Britain has, I think, at least served this good purpose. In spite of the suffering it has caused and is causing to thousands of individuals, it has forced many to think of this problem of spare time, and it has led to experiments which have revealed the great untapped resources of personality which are lying dormant in great masses of the population.

The problem now is to discover how those resources can be developed and set free. It is through the release and cultivation of that side of human energy that a state of civilisation can gradually be built up which would be infinitely richer than anything we can conceive of to-day.

Factory Inspection in Czechoslovakia, 1930-1935¹

ORGANISATION

The statutory basis of factory inspection in Czechoslovakia is provided by the Austrian Act No. 117 of 17 June 1883 and the Hungarian Act No. XXVIII of 1893. These two Acts are so similar, as regards their main provisions, that their retention side by side does not interfere with uniform organisation of the inspection services. The only adjustment that had to be made was a slight modification of the scope of the inspectors in the territories formerly belonging to Hungary. Order No. 78 of 20 April 1919, issued by the Minister for Slovakia, removed boilers from the competence of the inspectors, and Act No. 47 of 27 January 1921 did away with a restriction contained in the Hungarian law limiting the competence of inspectors to undertakings employing at least 20 persons or using power-driven machinery.

In general, industrial and commercial undertakings and places where home work is performed are subject to factory inspection. The annual report of the inspectorate for 1930 suggests that the scope of the inspectors should be extended to include "subsidiary industrial undertakings in agriculture and forestry (quarries, saw-mills, alcohol distilleries, chicory-drying rooms, flax-breaking sheds, dairies, etc.), since these differ in no way from industrial undertakings proper". The report goes on to propose, on the same grounds, the inclusion of co-operative undertakings, consumers' societies, municipal and other publicly-owned undertakings, associations of an economic

¹ This survey is based on information published in the annual reports on factory inspection.

character, banking and credit institutions, savings-banks, pawnshops, charitable institutions, cinemas, theatres, and other places of entertainment, newspaper publishing houses, and the work of all salaried employees in private undertakings.

During the period under review there were in the whole country 29 provincial inspection offices and 3 special inspection offices, two of which, situated at Prague and Brno, were for the building industry in these towns and their immediate environs, and the other for water-pipe installation work in Prague. The number of provincial inspection offices was raised to 34 by an Order of 22 May 1935, which was applied in the following year. The new division of the country into inspection districts was rendered necessary by the development of industry and of social legislation, which added continually to the duties of the inspectors. Its purpose was to create districts of approximately equal area, containing approximately equal numbers of factories and establishments to be inspected, every part being easily accessible by railway.

Concurrently with this reform, an increase was made in the staff of the inspection services. From 1930 to 1935 the inspectorate consisted ordinarily of 6 officials attached to the central factory inspectorate, 82 inspectors, and 7 first-class employees (secretaries), and 6 second-class employees (clerks) of the auxiliary technical service. In 1935, the number of inspectors was raised by 25, while 32 new posts were created for clerks, half of them being reserved for workers to be engaged by special contract.

The attitude of the chiefs of the factory inspectorate is a progressive one, and they often take the initiative in making innovations to increase the efficacy of the inspectors' supervision pending the structural reorganisation of the whole system. Something of this attitude is clearly revealed in the following words contained in the preface to the report for 1930: "Factory inspection, closely connected as it is with the industrial life of the country, must adapt itself to the ever-increasing requirements of the day. Before the war, inspectors could concentrate chiefly on the technical side of their task—the safety of workers. The development of social legislation in the post-war period, however, has obliged them to devote more and more attention to social conditions. The factory inspector nowadays must be an expert not only in technical matters, but also in the realm of social problems. The constant technical development of industry forbids him to relax his vigilance in respect of the first of these fields, but he must also be equal to the new tasks continually being imposed upon him by the advance of social legislation. The economic depression subjected the inspectors, already tried to the utmost by the excessively wide range of their duties, to a very severe test. In addition to their principal function, which is to supervise the observance of the law relating to the protection of workers, they had very frequently to intervene in cases in which employers desired, in view of a contraction in the market or on account of rationalisation involving a reduction in the amount of labour required, to restrict output, close down an undertaking, or dismiss staff. They had also to conduct a number of complicated enquiries, collect statistical material for the central authorities, and perform various other tasks. Experience has shown

more clearly than ever that the number of officials in this important branch of the national administration is still insufficient, and that steps must be taken to reorganise the inspectorate on the basis of the Bill prepared several years ago by the Minister of Social Welfare." It should be noted that this Bill, according to a passage in the report for 1931, entrusts the inspectors with certain administrative powers, on the ground that the present limitation of their powers of decision seriously diminishes the effectiveness of their work.

Among the steps taken to assist the inspector in the performance of his duties, mention should first be made of the establishment, within the central inspectorate, of a central office for the protection of juvenile workers, to which is attached an advisory committee composed of 18 representatives of all sections of the juvenile workers' movement. Besides this central committee, a district advisory committee, whose membership varies according to the stage of development of the organisations in the area, has been attached to the inspection office of each district. The members of these committees and their substitutes are appointed by the Minister of Social Welfare on the proposal of the organisations concerned. In 1931 the number of juvenile workers participating directly, through the committees, in the protection of the interests of their fellows was in the neighbourhood of 400. Their help proved particularly useful in the detection of abuses to which juvenile workers are subjected. Their personal experience and their access to sources of inside information from the workers themselves enable them to supply the advisory committees with valuable knowledge regarding not only particular cases in which the law is violated, but also gaps in existing legislation that require to be filled. The meetings of the district committees are presided over by the local inspectors, who are usually responsible for transmitting suggestions to the central office for the protection of juvenile workers, to be passed on by it to the central advisory committee. After examination by this committee, suggestions for amendments in the law or the adoption of new regulations are submitted to the competent services of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Finally, reference must be made to the establishment, under the central factory inspectorate, of a rationalisation service, whose duty is to study the repercussions on the condition of the workers of steps taken to reduce production costs. The importance of this aspect of industrial organisation has also been brought to the attention of all factory inspectors, who have been asked to keep it in mind in their visits to workplaces.

WORK OF THE INSPECTORS

In practice, the function of the factory inspectors is to supervise the application of all the provisions of the law relating to the protection of workers. This means that every new piece of legislation relating to labour questions automatically enlarges their competence, without necessarily containing any express provision to this effect. The factory inspector is a kind of liaison officer who, having no jurisdiction of his own, represents the authorities responsible for enforcing the law and for regulating conditions of employment. Through the super-

visory function which he exercises in the establishments assigned to him, he performs a two-fold task. In the first place, he ensures the enforcement of social legislation by informing the public administrative authorities of serious infractions and of cases in which his own intervention proves ineffective, and in the second place he assists in the improvement of social legislation by reporting to the central authorities any gaps that he may notice in existing regulations and any conditions which may call for the adoption of new legislation or administrative measures. Although an inspector is empowered to take a decision himself only in very rare cases, he has an unlimited right of supervision and enquiry in all matters connected with the protection of workers, and has therefore an extremely wide field of action.

Hours of Work

One of the most important of the Acts whose observance is supervised by the inspectors is the Eight-Hour Day Act of 19 December 1918, which, besides regulating hours of work generally, contains a number of important provisions concerning weekly rest, night work, the employment of children, young persons, and women, and other matters. This Act stipulates that factory inspectors may authorise the working of overtime during a period not exceeding four weeks in the year; applications in respect of longer periods must be submitted to the administrative authorities. On several occasions during the economic depression the use of this prerogative was made the subject of special instructions issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs to the factory inspectors, asking them to submit all applications to strict examination and, in dealing with them, to consult the employment exchanges and trade organisations on the employment situation in the various branches of industry. This reinforcement of public supervision produced very satisfactory results, as may be seen from the table below, which shows that the amount of overtime worked fell by 95 per cent. between 1930 and 1935.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED OVERTIME, 1930-1935

Year	Authorisations granted		Total hours of overtime authorised	Number of infractions reported	
	By the factory inspectors	By the administrative authorities		Illegal night work	Illegal overtime
1930	1,401	614	5,972,752	451	893
1931	1,120	487	4,280,736	456	1,071
1932	491	144	1,272,072	373	943
1933	475	203	1,199,135	941	2,831
1934	338	209	959,524	452	1,177
1935	88	153	318,320	793	2,685

It is probable that the decline in production itself contributed largely to this fall; but there is no doubt that the severity shown by the inspectors in dealing with applications for the authorisation of overtime had a considerable influence. In 1934, only 36 per cent. of the total number of applications were granted, and in 1935 the proportion fell to 13 per cent. Further evidence of the strictness of the inspectors in this respect is furnished by the sharp rise in the number of infractions reported to the authorities; prosecutions for unauthorised overtime tripled in number during the period under consideration.

The disquieting spread of unemployment led the Government to apply further measures relating to hours of work, the enforcement of which added to the duties of the inspectors. In building work financed or subsidised by the State, for instance, employers had to undertake to introduce the 40-hour week, at least for unskilled workers, in order to provide employment for as many hands as possible. It was the business of the inspectors to see that the employers observed the conditions under which contracts were assigned to them.

As regards the supervision of hours of work, it is worth noting that previous to 1935 (the year in which the staff of the inspectorate was substantially increased) the annual reports drew attention to serious deficiencies due to the shortage of inspectors. The raising of the number of inspectors, however, did not provide a complete remedy. The report for 1930 stressed the difficulty of checking actual hours worked in the building and transport industries and in establishments authorised to exceed the weekly maximum of 48 hours on condition that average hours over a period of four weeks conformed to this maximum. In order to render supervision more effective in such cases, the inspectors suggest that daily hours worked should be recorded compulsorily in registers. The inspectors consider further that they should be empowered to enter any establishment during night hours, and not, as the law at present provides, only establishments admittedly engaging in night work. It is pointed out that the law as it stands often renders impossible the proper supervision of small workshops, and particularly of bakeries, whose owners may refuse access to the inspector during night hours on the ground that no work is being performed.

Safety and Hygiene

The factory inspectors consider one of their most important tasks to be the detection, by means of constant investigation, of circumstances likely to endanger the safety and health of workers. The annual reports do not give statistics of cases in which inspectors have had to make suggestions or give instructions for the improvement of conditions of employment in this respect, but the chapter dealing with these questions always contains a large variety of examples of this intervention. In cases of serious infraction of the regulations relating to safety, the inspectors notify the administrative authorities. Between 1930 and 1935, the number of infractions reported rose from 192 to 357, while

the number of industrial accidents fell from 75,366 to 24,251—a decline of over two-thirds.

The report for 1930 states that the factory inspectorate is informed of accidents only through the medium of the accident insurance institutions. This system is not without its drawbacks, and the report goes on to say that it would be better if accidents were first reported to the inspectorate, which would then report them to the insurance institutions. "This proposal", the report states, "seems fully justified if it is remembered that one of the essential tasks of the inspectorate is to prevent accidents. The notification of accidents immediately on their taking place, and directly to the competent authorities, would greatly facilitate the performance of this task; failing this immediate notification, enquiry generally furnishes no results of practical value, since the conditions of work are changed before it can be carried out. The submission by the insurance institutions of masses of notifications at long intervals is clearly prejudicial to the efficiency of inspection, and does not provide a satisfactory basis for the preparation of reliable statistics at the end of the year." The report for 1933 makes the same criticism regarding the notification of industrial diseases.

Protection of Women and Young Persons

The protection of women and young persons is provided for chiefly by the Eight-Hour Day Act of 19 December 1918, which, as mentioned above, contains a number of provisions on this subject. The attention of the inspectors is devoted principally to seeing that the legal prohibition of the employment of children under 14 years, and of women and young persons at night, is observed. They also supervise the observance of measures prohibiting the employment of young persons (boys under 16 and girls under 18 years of age) at work harmful to their health or physical development, of apprentices at work other than their own trades, and so on. The importance of the duties of the inspectors in this field may be seen from the table below, in connection with which it should be mentioned that a large majority (74 per cent. on

ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT, 1930-1935

Year	Persons employed illegally			Cases of illegal employment reported		
	Females	Males	Percentage of staff of establishments inspected	Children under 14 years	Night work of women and young persons	Employment of women on Saturday afternoon
1930	4,764	345	0.5	4	105	19
1931	2,467	246	0.3	6	120	19
1932	2,135	241	0.3	—	143	22
1933	1,839	327	0.3	6	323	24
1934	1,999	230	0.3	9	156	33
1935	2,752	419	0.4	5	315	38

an average) of the cases of illegal employment of women were discovered in factories where women were found working after 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

The help given by the advisory committees set up in 1930 ¹ enabled the inspectors to obtain good results in the protection of juvenile workers. The meetings of these committees, which numbered on an average 135 in the year, gave the representatives of juvenile workers the opportunity of bringing before the inspectors cases in which the legal rights of young workers, or of apprentices, had been violated by an employer. Most of the complaints made related to cases in which legal hours had been exceeded, work effected illegally at night or on Sunday, paid holidays refused, sickness insurance evaded, apprentices employed in excessive numbers, apprentices badly treated or put on work other than their own trade, inadequate accommodation provided, articles of apprenticeship terminated without due cause, etc. Whenever it was possible, the inspectors examined these complaints without delay, and reported on the results of steps taken at the succeeding meeting of the advisory committee.

Home Work

The Act of 12 December 1919, which regulated wages and conditions of employment in home work, placed upon the inspectors the task of supervising the conditions of work of home workers, the workplaces, the distribution of the materials, and the delivery of the finished product. As home work was very widespread in Czechoslovakia, particularly in certain regions, the work of the inspectors was as difficult as it was useful, the chief difficulty arising from the smallness of their number in comparison with that of the workplaces to be inspected. With a view to the solution of this problem, the report for 1931 emphasised the importance of an arrangement made in one province, under which the legal representatives of the workers

INSPECTION OF HOME WORK

Year	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
Workplaces inspected	964	715	861	772	822	1,347
Workers reached	1,317	1,019	1,576	965	1,148	1,847

were made responsible, with the consent of the employers, for the regular supervision of conditions of employment in the crystal glass industry. The adoption of this scheme had led to considerable improvement in the conditions of employment of home workers in the industry, and the central factory inspectorate is of the opinion that similar schemes might usefully be adopted by other categories of home workers.

The supervision of home work has been rendered considerably more effective by the engagement of a number of new inspectors, particularly assistant inspectors recruited from the working population. The table given above shows that the increase of the inspection

¹ See above, p. 653.

staff in 1935 resulted immediately in an increase of more than 60 per cent. over the preceding year in the number of workplaces inspected and in the number of home workers reached in the course of the inspectors' rounds.

Conciliation and Arbitration

The factory inspectors have no clearly defined duties to perform in respect of industrial disputes. If they intervene, they generally do so in virtue of the provisions of the Factory Inspection Act, which requires them to promote good relations between employers and workers. Their efforts in this connection are devoted chiefly to preventing disputes from degenerating into open conflicts, and they usually attempt to mediate only if one of the parties appeals for their good offices. They are not informed of all disputes which take place, since the law requires the notification of industrial disputes to the Statistical Office, but not to the inspectors.

Apart from individual cases of intervention of the kind just described, mention should also be made of the part played by the inspectors on the various conciliation and arbitration boards set up under special Acts or under the terms of collective agreements. The

ACTIVITY OF THE INSPECTORS IN CONNECTION WITH ARBITRATION AND CONCILIATION

Year	Disputes notified to the inspectors	Disputes settled without stoppage of work	Cases of intervention by the inspectors	Boards upon which inspectors have sat		
				As assessors	As experts	As arbitrators
1930	363	242	561	265	15	4
1931	491	318	838	218	17	2
1932	545	318	983	216	27	7
1933	477	304	821	172	7	5
1934	490	295	839	116	11	3
1935	576	368	893	136	1	6

Act of 12 August 1921 relating to workshop committees provides that disputes arising from the application of its provisions must be settled by an arbitration board including among its members an assessor chosen from the public officials engaged in dealing with social or economic questions, and the administrative authorities, who have to make the necessary nominations, usually select a factory inspector for this position. The same applies to the appointment of the members of the regional home work boards established by the Act of 12 December 1919 for the settlement of conflicts arising in the branches of industry for which they are competent. These boards include, besides the employers' and workers' representatives, independent members ordinarily selected from among the factory inspectors to serve as experts. Finally, inspectors are usually called upon to act as arbitrators in the various conciliation committees set up under the terms of collective agreements for the settlement of disputes.

The table given above shows the extent of the work of the inspectors in the field of arbitration and conciliation.

Other Work of the Inspectors

Besides exercising a general supervision over the undertakings assigned to them, the inspectors have to act as expert advisers on all questions relating to conditions of employment and the application of social legislation. This involves a good deal of work : in 1935 alone the number of advisory opinions, reports, and places of official information, furnished by the inspectors was 43,541, and in the period 1930-1935 the average annual number exceeded 36,000, of which 60 per cent. were addressed to administrative authorities of the first or second instance, 23 per cent. to the central authorities, and the remainder to courts, accident insurance institutions, or other public bodies.

Because of their thorough knowledge of methods of work in the various undertakings, and their constant contact with the working population, the inspectors are frequently given tasks which, though connected with their ordinary functions, are in the nature of extra work imposed by special circumstances. Among tasks of this kind, reference may be made to that involved in the application of the Order of 20 April 1934 introducing certain provisional measures to prevent the extension of unemployment. This Order stipulated, among other things, that an employer intending to close his factory for a period exceeding a fortnight, or to dismiss large numbers of his workers, must first make a declaration to the local authorities and the factory inspectorate, stating the reasons for his intention, and must refrain from carrying it out until the consent of the administrative authorities had been given. The inspectors, in this case, had to act as experts and assist the authorities in coming to their decisions. According to the report for 1934, the authorities had to examine in that year 141 applications for the authorisation of collective dismissals, and 248 applications for authorisation to close factories ; the corresponding figures for 1935 were 128 and 323. The reports for these two years estimate at 20,000 the number of workers who were kept in employment each year as a result of the decisions taken by the authorities under this Order.

It should not be forgotten that the inspectors have to act not only as experts, but also in the equally important rôle of adviser, which they are frequently called upon to fill by employers, workers, or their organisations. In each of the years under review they replied, either in writing or by word of mouth, to an average of 37,500 demands for information, about three-fifths of which came from employers and two-fifths from workers.

Strictness of the Supervision exercised

In conclusion, a few figures will be given to show the extent of the supervision exercised by the factory inspectorate.

The following table shows that, despite the substantial increase in the number of undertakings subject to inspection, their proportion to the total number has remained almost unchanged. The year 1935 witnessed a marked development in all the activities of the inspectorate, clearly

GENERAL ACTIVITY OF THE INSPECTORATE, 1930-1935

Year	Establishments subject to accident insurance		Factories		Visits to under- takings	Workers employed in the under- takings inspected	Infra- ctions reported to the author- ities	Special enquiries in con- nection with demands or com- plaints	Cases of in- spectors' collabora- tion on commis- sions, boards, etc.
	Total	Percent- age inspected	Total	Percent- age inspected					
1930	118,651	23.3	12,033	64.5	35,234	954,931	2,714	8,680	7,693
1931	122,898	22.3	11,993	61.4	34,661	893,722	2,744	9,409	6,264
1932	127,213	23.2	11,822	61.3	37,379	800,500	2,714	9,355	6,036
1933	131,290	22.6	11,159	55.6	38,538	688,063	5,278	9,408	5,089
1934	134,063	22.7	11,040	61.4	33,063	725,027	2,639	11,819	5,258
1935	138,938	25.2	10,936	64.2	46,728	844,343	5,314	16,535	5,027

owing to the measures taken to increase the staff. The number of visits paid to undertakings was 30 per cent. higher than the average for the five preceding years. And the remarkable increase in the number of enquiries carried out by the inspectors in response to demands from the authorities, from organisations, or from private individuals, illustrates still more strikingly the degree in which these staff increases assisted the inspectorate in meeting all the calls made upon it.

An advance may also be observed in the number of infractions reported by the inspectors. It should be mentioned, in this connection, that the reports give a brief account of the steps taken by the authorities regarding infractions communicated to them, but only in about three quarters of the total number of cases reported, as the inspectors are not always notified of action taken.

The only figures which have diminished, according to the above table, are those relating to the inspectors' participation as experts in the work of the various commissions. Since, however, these commissions are for the most part established for the purpose of considering applications for the authorisation of new undertakings or the transformation of existing plant, the fall is to be attributed to factors having nothing to do with the inspectorate, such as the economic depression and the resulting decline of business enterprise.