



Industrial Inspection in Soviet Russia

A description is given of the industrial inspection system in Soviet Russia. The majority of the inspectorate are elected by the workers and are themselves drawn from the working classes. They are assisted by technical and health inspectors, who are appointed in virtue of special technical attainments by the central authorities. National industries, such as railways, are inspected by a special staff of functional inspectors. Younger inspectors are entrusted with the inspection of child employment.

Some information is given on the age, education, political affiliation, etc. of the inspectorate staff and on the number of visits made and results achieved in 1920 and in August 1921.

DURING the first few months following the October Revolution of 1917 the industrial inspection service of the Czarist régime in Russia, which had first been established in 1882, continued to function. Then followed a period of confusion, as in all other departments of public life. Finally, the Soviet authorities created an entirely new system. This system was based on the idea of a body of inspectors elected by the workers, instead of appointed by the authorities, an idea which dates back to the time of the Provisional Government of 1917, when there had been a suggestion to establish a body of assistant inspectors to be chosen by the workers' organisations. The extent to which this central idea has been carried out, and, alternately, the extent to which it had to be modified, will be seen from the following account.

ELECTED INSPECTORS

The first step was the issue of the Decree of 18 May 1918 by the Soviet authorities. This Decree swept away all existing bodies of the nature of district or central boards of inspectors, and set up the system of elected inspectors. More detailed provisions were laid down in an Instruction on Industrial Inspection issued on 10 July in the same year. The provisions of the Decree and Instruction were incorporated in the Labour Code drawn up towards the end of the year (1). Eventually, final regulations were issued on 15. December 1919 (2), dealing with the whole question.

The Labour Code defines a labour inspector as one who is himself a worker and therefore in touch with working conditions,

(1) Sections 131 and 132 of Labour Code of 1918 (incorporated as Nos. 87 and 88 of the Code of Laws of 17 May 1920). It is interesting to note that already at this time there is mention of non-elected technical and health inspectors, in addition to the elected inspectors ; see Section 905.

(2) Code of Laws, Nos. 37 and 38, Sections 173.

elected by his fellow workers to inspect those working conditions. Even when, later, technical and other inspectors, appointed after examination, were added to the body of elected inspectors, yet the idea was not abandoned that it was the elected inspector *par excellence* who made decisions on all questions of principle⁽³⁾.

Elections of inspectors are organised by the local Labour Section, which is the local organ of the Labour Commissariat ; failing them, by the Labour Section in the provincial Government. Candidates are proposed by workers' organisations, such as trade unions, or by the local Labour Sections themselves. Where it is impossible to call a meeting of working-class organisations for the purpose, elections may be carried out by the local inter-trade union committee at a plenary sitting, working-class organisations having previously been called upon to state their opinion on the candidates. All elections have to be confirmed by the Labour Commissariat.

Number and Character of the Elected Inspectorate

As will be seen from the description given below, the functions of the elected inspectors are extremely wide. To ensure an adequate service a large and experienced staff of inspectors would be required. When the first start was made, in 1918, it was felt undesirable to draw in any way on the old staff which had been appointed under the Czarist authorities, and it was decided to obtain new men throughout⁽⁴⁾. The Labour Commissariat asked the Labour Sections to make suggestions as to the number of elections to be made. As the Sections failed to reply to the enquiry, the Commissariat proceeded to draw up a scheme on a theoretical basis. Under the Czarist government, 1 inspector had been allotted per every 20,000 to 25,000 workers ; it was decided now to allot 1 inspector per every 7,000 to 8,000 workers. The total number of workers was reckoned on a basis of a total population of 70 millions for Soviet Russia ; out of these 70 millions there were reckoned to be 5 millions of workers in all, namely, 3½ millions, or about 65 to 70 per cent., of trade union workers, and 1½ millions, or about 30 to 35 per cent., of non-union workers. On this basis of an estimated 5 million workers it was decided to fix the numbers of the elected inspectorate at 650.

It was obviously impossible to elect the whole of this staff at

⁽³⁾ Cf. S. KAPLUNE : *Okhrana trouda za 2 goda proletarskoj revolutsii. 1917-1919 g. g.* (The Protection of Labour during two Years of Proletarian Revolution, Moscow, 1920 ; 19 pp.), p. 5, where it is stated that, in order to make a good inspector, "it is not enough to show revolutionary energy and to be in close touch with the masses ; special attainments are also required. That is why we have made an appeal to technical experts and to doctors. Our legislation assigns, more especially to the latter, a consultative rôle ; it is they who solve problems of a special nature. Nevertheless, it is the [elected] industrial inspector who directs our whole policy of the protection of labour".

⁽⁴⁾ Inspectors who had been appointed under the Czarist or Provisional Governments were allowed to draw their salaries on condition of handing over all the information, papers, etc. in their possession.

the outset or to get it into working order. An estimate (5) gives the number of elected inspectors during the years between 1918 and 1921 as follows.

| Year and Date | Number of elected inspectors |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| End of 1918 | 127 |
| July 1919 | 212 |
| August 1920 | 535 |
| March 1921 | 812 |
| November 1921 | 1,457 |

By comparison with the 200 to 300 inspectors of Czarist times, the size of the inspectorate staff and especially its rapid increase, appear very satisfactory.

At least two-thirds of the number of inspectors are drawn from the class of salaried employees in subordinate positions or from manual workers. In 1919 there were in January, on a staff of 127 inspectors, 74 who had been workmen or foremen and 10 who had been salaried employees, and in August, on a staff of 212 inspectors, 133 who had been workmen or foremen, and 28 who had been salaried employees. Between 1918 and 1921 the number of inspectors drawn from the intellectual classes began to grow, but owing to the transference of the protection of labour to the trade unions (6), by the end of June 1921, the proportion of working-class inspectors suddenly rose from 56 per cent. in January to 74 per cent. in August 1921. Naturally, only a very elementary standard of education had been attained; the number of those who had received a university education is stated to have been 5 or 6 per cent. in 1919, and 2 per cent. in 1921.

A progressive tendency may be noted to elect slightly older men. While in 1919 the proportion of elected inspectors under 25 years of age varied, at different times of the year, between 10.7 and 16.5 per cent., in 1922 it had fallen to 9.7 per cent. This is partly due to the practice of re-electing the same men. It is perhaps even more noticeable that inspectors who have been elected are seldom liable to recall by their electors or to discharge for incapacity; indeed, on 1 July 1921 only 11.2 per cent. of the total number of inspectors leaving their office for any cause whatsoever did so because they were recalled or discharged (7). On 1 March 1921 45 per cent. of the elected staff had served less than a year, 30 per cent. had served between a year and a year and a half, and 25 per cent. had served over a year and a half. Taking into account mobilisations, transference to another state service, etc., such percentages show that the office of inspector was a very fairly stable one (8).

A very important question is that of the political parties to

(5) ZAITSEV in *Vesnik Trouda (The Labour Messenger)*, Jan. 1922, p. 57.

(6) ZAITSEV, *op. cit.*

(7) Another 7.3 per cent. had resigned, (reasons not stated).

(8) For information on the character of the elected inspectorate see ZAITSEV in *Vesnik Trouda*, Jan. 1922; S. KAPLUNE in the *Bulletin of the Labour Commissariat*, 1919, No. 10; and ZAITSEV in *Troud (Work)*, 7 Mar. 1921. These authorities are not in agreement with each other on all points.

which inspectors belong. Roughly two-thirds (65.1 per cent.) of all inspectors, as reported on 1 January 1922, were Communists, the remaining third (32.1 per cent.) were without political affiliations; 2.8 per cent. only belonged to a party other than the Communist party.

Powers and Functions of the Elected Inspectorate

General legislation and the instructions of the Labour Commissariat govern the work of the elected inspector; current instructions are taken from the local Labour Section and the local inter-trade union organisation. When visiting a factory an inspector must be in possession of an authorisation from the local Labour Section, giving him the right of entry by day or by night into any establishment and empowering him to call for any necessary information, such as books, etc. Whenever possible an inspector must be accompanied by a member of the works council or by a representative of the Section for Labour Protection of the local trade union body. In the inspection of important enterprises the ordinary inspector is, if necessary, accompanied by a technical or health inspector⁽⁹⁾.

There are three kinds of inspections, initial inspections, second inspections, and special inspections. Before entering on his round of inspection an inspector must call for (1) the inspection book, in which he records his remarks, (2) the card records, or, failing those, the list of employees, (3) the list of children or young persons employed, (4) the overtime record, (5) the daily establishment reports, (6) the accident record, (7) the list of boilers. He then certifies whether the Labour Code and special instructions applicable to the industry have been posted up in the establishment, and whether work-cards have been issued to the employees and have been kept up to date.

The inspector must inform himself on all subjects which affect the workers' life and well-being. He must visit all buildings connected with the establishment under inspection such as dormitories, bath establishments, hospitals, dining-rooms, co-operative stores, theatres, libraries, day nurseries. He must ascertain whether the hours of labour law and that on employment of women and children have been obeyed, and report any breaches and the causes which gave rise to them. He notes briefly in his inspection book such infractions of the law and any recommendation which he makes. In the course of a second visit for reinspection he ascertains whether these recommendations have been carried out; where this has not been done, he institutes a prosecution, and is required to state his case in court.

The inspector is empowered, acting with the consent of the works council, to take special measures, even involving the partial or total closure of the establishment. In a general way, the

(9) See below, sub. vcc.

inspector requires all accidents to be notified to him immediately, makes an enquiry on the spot, and takes all necessary precautions with a view to avoid the recurrence of similar accidents, reporting also to the local Labour Section.

An inspector draws up a report on each inspection made, entering any complaints brought to his notice; these reports are classified by industries. He also keeps a daily record, and sends up a report once a month, and, again, once every six months, to the Labour Section in the provincial Government and the Labour Commissariat. He has the use of the offices and seal of the local Labour Section, and any important action taken by him has to be confirmed by the head of that Section. Inspectors have no powers to punish breaches of the labour laws; they must refer them to the local Labour Section.

A very important and interesting part of the elected inspector's work are his consultations. The elected inspector may be consulted by any individual worker or individual manager at fixed hours; a list of these hours is posted up in all establishments. Each inspector fixes consultation hours on an average at least three days a week. The consultations are usually concerned with a limited range of topics, chiefly information as to exemption from compulsory labour, as to overtime, and as to the employment of young workers. Not only does the inspector on such occasions answer his enquirer by giving him information on these points, but he is more frequently called upon to give definite decisions on disputed points.

An elected inspector interests himself in establishing Sections for Labour Protection, collaborating with local trade union bodies and works councils, and assists in directing their work. He lectures and reports on his own work to the more important local trade and inter-trade union bodies. In establishing labour protection he must consult the Union of Communist Youth and the Women's Sections of the Communist Party. In every way he attempts to spread among the workers the idea of the protection of labour. He is also empowered to make any suggestions for the amendment of existing legislation. He is further in communication with economic organisations, food distributing associations, educational and public welfare bodies, housing authorities (as set up by local soviets), and public health authorities. He is commissioned to take part in the discussions of all these bodies and left free to make his own suggestions. In cases of conflict with outside bodies he first submits his case to the local inter-trade union body through the local Labour Section, then to the superior authority of the body with whom he is in disagreement, and, finally, to the organisation in the Government representing the Labour Commissariat. He cannot stay any action initiated by himself, but is bound to let it proceed to final decision.

Actual Work Accomplished (10)

The average number of visits of inspection paid each month has varied considerably. The Instruction of 15 December 1919

had commissioned inspectors to pay the largest possible number of visits. Following out this advice to the letter some inspectors paid a large number of very cursory visits with the idea, so it is stated, of putting more visits to their credit than did their colleagues⁽¹¹⁾. Subsequently, this practice was somewhat abated. The following figures are given of the average number of visits paid by each inspector per month.

| Date | Average number of visits per month per inspector |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1919 (second half-year) | 10.6 |
| 1920 (first half-year) | 8.7 |
| (second half-year) | 8.5 |
| 1921 April | 6.9 |
| May | 4.9 |
| June | 6.0 |
| July | 5.9 |
| August | 5.1 |

The numbers of visits paid varies greatly according to industry. The following table gives figures for August 1921.

VISITS PAID BY ELECTED INSPECTORS IN SOVIET RUSSIA IN AUGUST 1921

| Groups of industries | Establishments visited | Workers in establishments visited | Average number of workers per establishment visited |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Agriculture and forestry | 67 | 3,774 | 56 |
| Mining | 9 | 7,634 | 848 |
| Manufacturing | 267 | 43,375 | 159 |
| Local transport | 19 | 966 | 51 |
| Public services | 95 | 1,308 | 14 |
| Liberal professions | 117 | 3,160 | 27 |
| Posts, telegraphs, and soviet clerical workers | 105 | 7,567 | 72 |
| Total | 679 | 67,784 | 96 |

During the same month, August 1921, 65 per cent. of all establishments were visited for the first time, 23 per cent. for the second time, having already been visited in previous months, 6 per cent. for the third time, 2 per cent. for the fourth time, and 4 per cent. for the fifth time. The average number of prosecutions instituted was 24 among every 100 inspectors. The most severe punishment—complete closure of an establishment—is seldom enforced; there were something like ten for the whole of Russia in the course of August 1921.

Very few accidents are notified, probably an extremely small percentage of all that occur. The number actually notified works

⁽¹⁰⁾ The information as to actual work accomplished, is taken from ZAITSEV in *Vestnik Trouda*, Jan. 1922.

⁽¹¹⁾ S. KAPLUNE, op. cit.

out at 48 per 10,000 trade unionists annually ⁽¹²⁾. In 31 per cent. of these recorded accidents an enquiry was held by an elected inspector ; in 58 per cent. of these enquiries, i.e. practically on every other occasion, the elected inspector was accompanied by a technical inspector.

As mentioned above, the elected inspector holds consultation hours in which he answers enquiries and authorises exemptions from labour regulations. In 1921 the monthly average of consultations given by each inspector was 45. The purposes of the enquirers are classified as follows : 25 per cent. wish for information about exemption from compulsory labour ; 10 per cent. about holidays ; 10 per cent. about the employment of young workers ; and so on. On an average there were 67.78 consultations per 10,000 trade union workers in August 1921.

Authorisations for exemptions are shown in the following table. It is important, however, to note that a Soviet estimate puts the percentage of cases in which authorisation is asked for at only 10 per cent. of all cases in which overtime, etc. is actually worked.

EXEMPTIONS GRANTED IN RESPECT OF LABOUR LEGISLATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA
IN AUGUST 1921

| Nature of exemption | Exemptions | | | Per inspector | | Per 10,000 trade unionists | |
|--------------------------------|------------|---------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Asked for | Granted | Workers covered | Average number of exemptions | Average number of workers covered | Average number of exemptions | Average number of workers covered |
| Adult male labour | | | | | | | |
| Overtime | 180 | 143 | 2,096 | 1.7 | 24.7 | 2.4 | 35.2 |
| Holiday work | 91 | 89 | 435 | 1.0 | 5.1 | 1.5 | 7.3 |
| Adult female labour | | | | | | | |
| Night work | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Juvenile employment | | | | | | | |
| Employment] | | | | | | | |
| Children under 14 | 91 | 45 | 45 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Children between 14 and 16 | 232 | 219 | 219 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| Overtime | | | | | | | |
| For children under 14 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| For children between 14 and 16 | 16 | 11 | 72 | 0.1 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1.2 |
| For young persons over 16 | 22 | 12 | 54 | 0.1 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.9 |
| Miscellaneous | 56 | 39 | 55 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.9 |
| Total | 716 | 558 | 2,976 | 6.6 | 35.0 | 9.7 | 50.2 |

⁽¹²⁾ In the more important industries the trade unions included at this time practically all workers employed ; in less important industries there was a small percentage of labour outside the unions.

Child Employment Inspection

Part of the function of elected inspectors is the inspection of children employed in industry or otherwise. Following a proposal made in 1919 a body of assistant inspectors of child labour was definitely established at the beginning of 1920 by Decree of the Social Welfare Commissariat. These assistant inspectors are nominated by factory or trade union groups of the Union of Communist Youth from their own members, and appointed by the local inter-trade union bodies, the appointments being confirmed by the local Labour Section⁽¹³⁾. They are directly responsible to the elected labour inspector.

Since 1921 the system seems to have been slightly altered ; it is now attached to the Commissariat for Education. An Instruction of 23 October 1921 created the title of Social Aid Brothers and Social Aid Sisters for these assistant inspectors and directed them to resist "the exploitation or ill-treatment of children in small or large-scale establishments or within their own family"⁽¹⁴⁾. In 1921 there were 127 assistant inspectors of child labour, of whom 85 per cent. were of male sex ; 50.2 per cent. had been elected by general meetings of groups of the Union of Communist Youth, 40.2 per cent. by committees of such groups, and the remaining 9.6 per cent. had been directly appointed by the trade unions. The average age was between 17 and 18, only very few being over 20 years old; the larger number had received an elementary education⁽¹⁵⁾; there were 55 salaried employees among them and 46 manual workers.

APPOINTED INSPECTORS

Technical Inspectors

Technical inspection was established by a Decree of 8 August 1918. This Decree was supplemented by an Instruction to Agents supervising Technical Safety Arrangements issued on 24 August in the same year, and the terms of this Instruction were afterwards repeated in an Instruction to Technical Inspectors of 6 February 1920⁽¹⁶⁾.

The technical inspection service, like the health inspection service which is noticed below, differs from the general system adopted by the Soviet authorities, as the principle of pure election, to be confirmed by the Labour Commissariat, is abandoned. The Section for Labour Protection at the Labour Commissariat itself appoints, although it does so out of a list of candidates presented by trade union bodies. The Labour Commissariat also retains

⁽¹³⁾ *Professionalnæ Dvizhenie (The Trade Union Movement)* Nos. 2-3, 1920, p. 8. Moscow.

⁽¹⁴⁾ *Izvestia*, 7 Nov. 1921.

⁽¹⁵⁾ *Voprosi Trouda (Labour Questions)*, No. 1, 1922, p. 183. Moscow.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Code of Laws, 1920. Nos. 40-41, Section 183.

the power to dismiss or transfer technical inspectors, acting through the Labour Section in a provincial Government where it is a case of transference within such an area.

Number and Character of the Technical Inspectorate

Technical inspectors have received a higher technical education or, in exceptional cases, at least a good secondary education together with some sort of practical training. From the outset recruitment was attempted from the old body of factory inspectors. The scheme drawn up in 1918 contemplated a staff of 141 inspectors, but at the end of that year there had only been 88 appointments, as follows: 72 technical inspectors for industry, 2 mining inspectors, 3 civil engineers, 6 certificated economists from the Commercial Institute, and 5 specialists in mechanical work. Of these 88 inspectors, 62 had held appointments as ordinary factory inspectors, and 10 as special boiler inspectors, under the Czarist régime. In 1919 the number of technical inspectors had risen to 102⁽¹⁷⁾, while the numbers continued to increase slightly during the next year, 1920, from 121 during the first six months to 129 during the last six months. But not quite all these inspectors gave their whole time to their inspection functions; in some cases a certain amount of other work was combined with inspection work.

The following table gives certain particulars with regard to the education standard etc. of the technical inspection staff in 1920, no particulars being available for the years 1921 and 1922⁽¹⁸⁾.

TECHNICAL INSPECTION STAFF IN SOVIET RUSSIA IN 1920

| 1920 | Total number of inspectors | Drawn from former (Czarist) staff ⁽¹⁾ | Education | | | Whole-time | Combining other duties |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | | | Higher | Secondary | Elementary | | |
| First six months | 121 | 30 | 89 | 23 | 9 | 108 | 13 |
| Second six months | 129 | 37 | 91 | 32 | 6 | 95 ⁽²⁾ | 34 ⁽²⁾ |

(1) Total number of 'factory inspectors' under the Czarist régime was 280.

(2) Estimated.

Powers and Functions of the Technical Inspectorate

The Instruction of 6 February 1920 states that the functions of technical inspectors are as follows: "to assist the [elected] labour inspectors and the Sections for Labour Protection by means of their technical knowledge and special experience". Their functions are, therefore, much the same as those of the elected inspectors; they are, however, particularly charged to inspect special features, such as passage-ways between machinery and driving belts, ventilation, boilers, etc. Like the elected inspector

(17) S. KAPLUNE, op. cit. p. 5.

(18) SINEV and ZAITSEV in *Vestnik Trouda*, Sept. 1921, p. 37.

the technical inspector reports every month and also every six months to the Labour Inspection ; he also gives consultations, but not necessarily more than once a week.

The technical inspector must visit a factory if ordered to do so by the elected inspector, and is bound to report any breaches of the law to the latter. In the case of immediate danger the technical inspector is empowered to issue orders, but must at once refer the matter to the elected inspector and also to the local Labour Section. In the case of purely technical matters the decision of the technical inspector is final ; the elected inspector is the only person empowered to raise objection, which he does before the Labour Section in the provincial Government.

Actual Work Accomplished

Information on the work accomplished refers to the year 1920. During the first six months of that year the average number of establishments visited by each technical inspector was 163, and during the second six months 281⁽¹⁹⁾, being an average of 22 per cent. of all establishments within the control of each technical inspector during the whole year. In the course of the year 75.1 per cent. of all establishments inspected were visited once, 15 per cent. were visited twice, 5.8 per cent. three times, and 3.6 per cent. four times.

A large number of infractions of the labour laws were noted. The most frequent were infractions of the safety regulations, next in order came infractions of the heating and lighting regulations. About one-seventh of the whole number of infractions were second infractions of the same regulation by the same establishment.

Improvement in conditions in consequence of complaints appears to be unsatisfactory ; during the first six months of 1920 65 per cent. (6,210 out of 9,716), and during the second six months 60.6 per cent. (5,147 out of 8,694), of complaints made by technical inspectors remained without any effect. The reason why the complaints were not effective was principally lack of indispensable material and also of labour in the factory. These two causes accounted respectively for 55 and 29 per cent. of such non-failure to comply with recommendations during the first six months of 1920, and for 62.5 and 24.0 per cent. during the last six months.

Health Inspection

Health inspection was established by a Decree of the Labour Commissariat of 17 March 1919⁽²⁰⁾. The functions of health inspectors were defined by the Administrative Instructions to Health Inspectors of 15 January 1920⁽²¹⁾. These functions are of three kinds : enquiry into health conditions ; taking practical

⁽¹⁹⁾ The above information is derived from an article by Messrs. SINEV and ZAITSEV in *Vestnik Trouda (The Labour Messenger)* Sept. 1921, p. 37.

⁽²⁰⁾ Code of Laws, No. 15 (1919), Section 170.

⁽²¹⁾ *Ibid.* Nos. 40-41, (21 May 1920), Section 1821.

measures for the improvement of those conditions ; supervision over the carrying out of legislation.

The appointment of health inspectors, like that of technical inspectors, is placed in the hands of the Commissariat for Labour. In practice their work is to be regulated in the same way as that of the technical inspectors.

Information, however, both as to the distribution and as to the work of health inspectors is wholly lacking. At the end of 1919 it was stated :

We have not yet started the real organisation of health inspection in factories or of general labour conditions. By way of necessary compromise we have organised a permanent liaison with public health bodies in a great many provincial Governments or even with some of the medical staff attached to local public health services; this staff carries out the functions of health inspection, working in close collaboration with the labour inspection service and placing themselves directly under the orders of the local Sections for the Protection of Labour ⁽²²⁾.

FUNCTIONAL INSPECTION

The Instruction of 15 December 1919, noted above ⁽²³⁾, mentioned, besides the ordinary elected or appointed inspectors working a district, other elected or appointed inspectors working on a non-regional basis. Two years' experience had, in fact, shown not only that elected inspectors were apt to lack the necessary technical knowledge, and would have to be assisted by technical and health inspectors, but also that the crude application of the 'territorial' principle in the election of the inspectorate gave rise to considerable difficulties. Even the first six months had shown that the demand for "extending industrial inspection to all forms of labour" had not been carried through. It was stated at the time that

the majority of inspectors (who are almost all former rank and file from large-scale industry) confine their labours to the inspection of factories and workshops. . . All the small establishments, resembling the family type of establishment . . . or trades in which workers are associated in the very smallest groups or in which the places where work is carried on are not concentrated in one area, but scattered, perhaps down a long line, for example, railways, water transport services, bridge services, road services, special services like fire-brigade work, building, agricultural work, etc. . . all this lies outside the sphere inspected under the Commissariat for Labour. It has therefore been essential to establish functional inspection ⁽²⁴⁾.

Functional inspection was accordingly established by an Act of April 1919.

The powers of the functional inspector are the same as those of the ordinary elected or appointed inspector, and differ only in regard to the area over which he exercises them. Elections of functional inspectors, when chosen by this means, are made by the trade union concerned. In 1919 the following trade unions

⁽²²⁾ S. KAPLUNE, op. cit. p. 6.

⁽²³⁾ See above, p. 25.

⁽²⁴⁾ S. KAPLUNE in *Bulleten Commissariata Trouda (Bulletin of the Commissariat for Labour)*, 1919, No. 10, p. 13.

were stated by one writer to have elected functional inspectors : the railway, water transport, postal and telegraph, building trades, and commercial employees' unions ; an election was pending by agricultural workers⁽²⁵⁾. The Proceedings of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions for 1919, on the other hand, makes mention of functional inspectors in the following trade unions : building trades and public works, railways, seamen, soviet clerical workers, postal and telegraph, and hotel and restaurant trade⁽²⁶⁾. At the end of 1919 elections had been made or were due of 58 functional inspectors in the railwaymen's trade union, of 7 in the union of soviet clerical workers, and of 43 in that of postal and telegraph employees. The *Trade Union Movement* further states that arrangements had been made to elect a functional inspector for each Government by the agricultural trade union⁽²⁷⁾. Finally, in 1922 it was agreed that each trade union could appoint functional inspectors at its own expense if it considered that the ordinary inspection service was insufficient⁽²⁸⁾.

As an example of functional inspection may be mentioned the inspection of land and water transport as established by an Instruction of 10 July 1922⁽²⁹⁾. The inspecting staff includes elected functional inspectors, and appointed technical⁽²⁹⁾ and health inspectors⁽²⁹⁾. All are responsible to the Principal Inspector of Communications, whose area of authority comprises the whole country. Under him are both the area inspectors for Siberia, the Ukraine, Turkestan, the South East, and the North West, and the line inspectors of the railways. Area and line inspectors are elected by the corresponding sections of the railwaymen's trade union, the appointment being confirmed by the Commissariat for Labour. The next and last grade is that of the sub-inspectors who visit a certain specified length of line ; they are elected by a meeting of the workers employed on that section of the line.

The whole staff is ultimately responsible to the Commissariat for Labour. The Principal Inspector of Communications is attached to the Labour Protection Department of the Commissariat ; the area and line inspectors are attached to the local Labour Sections, and have the right of using the trade union offices for their clerical work.

A review of the whole situation brings out very clearly that the original principle which animated the Soviet authorities was to allow the workers themselves to elect from their own numbers

⁽²⁵⁾ Ibid.

⁽²⁶⁾ *Proceedings of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, 1919*, pp. 221, 243, 253, 279, 282, 348.

⁽²⁷⁾ *Professionálnœ Dvizhenie (The Trade Union Movement)*, Nos. 2-3, 1920, p. 8.

⁽²⁸⁾ Circular of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions in *Troud*, 22 June 1922.

⁽²⁹⁾ *Izvestia Kommissariata Trouda (News of the Labour Commissariat)*, Nos. 7-16, 23 Oct. 1922, p. 12.

those who should be responsible for their safety and well-being. In spite of the fact that at a very early date — indeed, almost from the outset — other inspectors, not elected by the workers, had to be appointed by the government authorities to supply the technical knowledge which the elected inspectors undoubtedly lacked, yet the principle has been kept formally intact. The technical (or health) inspector is directly responsible to the elected inspector, and, though giving urgent orders in case of accident, he is bound at once to report to the elected inspector ; the elected inspector is also the only person qualified to object to an order issued by a technical or health inspector.

Just as the technical inspector has to accept the authority of the elected inspector, so the elected inspector, be he regional or functional, is himself amenable to the authority of the local representatives of the Commissariat for Labour — the Labour Section. He is not merely in close collaboration with them, but he must obtain their authorisation before entering an establishment and he has to report to them ; nor can he of his own powers impose penalties, but has to refer to the Labour Section. In fact, his whole action is strictly supervised by the Section, whose offices he is compelled to use.

In other ways he is in much more immediate touch with the rank and file of the workers, who originally elected him, than is customary in western countries. Direct communication is established by means of consultation hours, a list of which is posted in each factory in the district.

But however fargoing as a system, an estimation of the actual work done is much more doubtful. Certain statistics have been quoted in the course of this article, but they are very incomplete. Even full figures could only cover a part of Russian industry ; only 10 per cent. of all accidents, for instance, are said to be reported at all.

It is obvious that the Russian inspection system is so far only in partial working order.

