

#### MASTER AND APPRENTICE ACT.

Under this Act the following rather interesting case was taken during the period. An apprentice left his employer during the currency of his agreement. The master sued for, and was awarded, damages by the Magistrate. On appeal, Mr. Justice Cooper reversed this decision, holding that, as the employer had failed to instruct the apprentice in one of the branches of his trade, the latter should have liberty to leave the master's service and enter the service of one who would so instruct him.

#### ADVANCES TO WORKERS AND WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACTS.

The Advances to Workers Act is dealt with in a parliamentary report by Mr. G. F. C. Campbell, Valuer-General.

The Workers' Dwellings Act is treated in a separate parliamentary report by Mr. Lomas, Chief Inspector of Factories, who is chief advisory officer to the Board.

#### THE SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT.

This Act has brought considerable satisfaction to the very numerous body of workers engaged in the building trades, especially as those trades have been excessively busy during the year, and without inspection many more risks might have had to be taken under the excessive pressure of business. This is particularly to be noted, as there is in the large towns a growing tendency to increase the height of buildings for the sake of economy in building, and in consequence of heavy ground-rents. The Inspectors appointed last year have carried out their duties in a very effective and praiseworthy manner, especially when the size of their districts is taken into consideration. Their work must necessarily be confined to the chief towns (since there are at present but four Inspectors for New Zealand), but, for example, the Inspector at Wellington includes in his district not only all Wellington Province, but also that of Hawke's Bay.

The Inspectors' reports convey in detail valuable suggestions, which are to be found printed herewith according to the different localities. Complaint is made as to danger to workmen on buildings from contact with electric wires and from the use of cast-iron bolts in scaffolding-brackets, and it is suggested that regulations or amending legislation should provide for these defects in the provisions made for the workers' safety.

It is satisfactory, however, to note how few the accidents now are, and to find that very much safer and stronger scaffolding is used than before the passing of the Act.

#### OBITUARY.

The Department of Labour and the Dominion generally sustained a severe loss in the death of Mr. James Mackay, Chief Inspector of Factories, on the 23rd September, 1907. He was one of the earliest appointed officers of the Department (then known as the Bureau of Industries), where his zeal and intelligence were priceless to those with whom he worked from the beginning of his career in the public service to its close. I here have to make official record of his death, but I am unable to convey in words my deep sense of the value of his services in aiding the organization of the Department.

#### THE LABOUR JOURNAL.

A considerable change has been made in the issue of the Journal of the Department of Labour. It has hitherto contained in its monthly issue the texts of industrial agreements, awards, decisions, &c., made under the Arbitration Act, as well as general matter relating to the Department, such as returns of unemployed assisted, reports of conditions of local trade, items of industrial interest from outside the Dominion, and articles republished from leading magazines in Britain and America. The present issues have taken the form of two distinct booklets. One deals wholly with matter relating to the Arbitration Act, and is entitled "Awards, Recommendations, and Decisions under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act"; the other publication, which retains the former name of the "Journal of the Department of Labour," contains information bearing on all questions affecting workers in New Zealand, and gives prominence to readable magazine articles on economic and social questions. These articles had gradually been attenuated and almost eliminated from the *Labour Journal* of late years through the bulk and pressure of Arbitration matter, and their restoration has been hailed with pleasure by thoughtful readers interested in social questions. The division into two parts has stimulated subscription to each of these separate divisions of our departmental publication, and helps financially to a considerable extent. The *Journal* is issued monthly, the "Awards, &c.," as the material accumulates sufficiently for issue. The *Journal* is sold at 2s. 6d. per annum; the "Awards, &c.," at 3s. 6d., both post-free.