

SECTION 15.—BUSH WORKERS ACT, 1945

(1) GENERAL

This Act came into force on 1st January, 1946, and provides for the protection of workers in the timber industry not already covered by the Factories Act (which applies to sawmills). Four Inspectors were appointed during the year, and 130 inspections of bush undertakings have been made, and requisitions for improvement served, as below :—

Requirements.	Number served.
To fit canopies on logging tractors or to repair existing canopies	26
To supply first-aid appliances	24
To protect machinery, fit guards, &c. ..	15
To repair bridges	7
To repair tramways	1
To improve ropes, blocks, &c.	1
Total	74

Regulations under this Act are in the course of preparation.

(2) ACCIDENTS

Preliminary figures disclose that during the calendar year 1946 there were two fatal accidents in bush undertakings. The first occurred when a laden bogie broke loose on a tram-line. A worker, in endeavouring to apply the brakes, fell underneath, his leg being severed above the knee. He died the following day. The second was due to a falling tree striking a standing one, and breaking off a limb, which in falling struck a worker on the head, causing fatal injuries.

Before the introduction of the Bush Workers Act employers were not obliged to notify accidents to the Department, and notification cannot be said yet to be complete. Wider coverage of bush undertakings by Inspectors will bring the new provisions to the notice of every employer, and no difficulty of administration is anticipated.

SECTION 16.—HARMFUL PROCESSES

Four sets of regulations affecting processes injurious to the health of workers in the absence of proper precautions may be commented upon as follows :—

(1) SPRAY PAINTING REGULATIONS 1940

These were described in the annual report for the year 1939-40. The regulations were made at a time when shortages of materials made compliance somewhat difficult, but they were enforced throughout the war years, and complaints in the year under review have been very few. Both employers and workers should now be fully aware of their obligations in regard to spray-booths and their ventilation and illumination and of the precautions necessary to the preservation of health. Ten requisitions for improvement under these regulations were served during the year.

(2) LEAD PROCESS REGULATIONS 1925 ; ACCUMULATOR (LEAD PROCESS) REGULATIONS 1940 ; REGULATIONS RELATING TO BRONZING (27 AWARDS 446) INCORPORATED IN PRINTING TRADES' AWARDS

In 1940 it was noted that no cases of lead poisoning resulted from paint-manufacturing and painting. Most of the thirteen cases of lead poisoning reported in that year came from storage-battery factories. Since that time strict enforcement of the 1940 regulations has resulted in a diminution of the risk to workers in lead, only one case of poisoning having been reported this year, in accumulator process work.

Four requisitions (see Table XXII) for compliance with the regulations were served during the year.