

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO ACT.

It has been urged that the benefits of this Act should be extended to cover not merely the erection of scaffolding, but all work performed by workers in the building trade. Many men are engaged in the erection, alteration, and demolition of buildings where no scaffolding is being used, and are nevertheless working in places of danger. The suggestion is commended to your careful consideration.

‘THE SHEARERS’ AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS’ ACCOMMODATION ACT, 1908.

SHEARERS’ ACCOMMODATION.

By means of the inspections made from time to time by the Department’s Inspectors, a gradual improvement is being effected throughout the whole of the Dominion in the accommodation provided for shearers. The total number of stations inspected throughout the Dominion was 292. Of these, 189 were found to provide satisfactory accommodation, forty-three required minor alterations to be made, thirty-four required extensive alterations, and twenty-six had no proper accommodation. In the instances where defects were found notices were served on the occupiers to ensure compliance with the Act. In consequence of the number of complaints received a special inspection was made of the accommodation provided for shearers in the Wellington, Hawke’s Bay, and Gisborne districts, an expert officer being detailed for the purpose.

Details showing the inspections made and condition of the accommodation provided in the several districts of the Dominion are given on page 33.

The Department has experienced some difficulty in effecting compliance with the requirements of the Act in regard to sleeping-accommodation where Europeans and Maoris are employed, owing to the fact that the latter usually prefer to sleep upon the floor, and have on occasions taken away the bunks erected for the convenience of shearers. The year following the employment of Maoris Europeans will sometimes be more largely employed, and complaints have then been made as to the lack of bunks or bedsteads; in such cases it has been necessary to call upon the occupiers to replace the bunks.

In several instances it has been found necessary to extend the time specified in the “requisitions” (for improvements to be made) until the following season, on account of lack of facilities for getting the material on to the ground.

FLAX-MILL AND SAWMILL WORKERS’ ACCOMMODATION.

Following upon the passing of the Shearers’ and Agricultural Labourers’ Accommodation Amendment Act, 1912, and the gazetting of the regulations thereunder in June, 1913, a considerable amount of attention has been given to an inspection of the accommodation provided at flax-mills and sawmills, and an Inspector from Wellington has devoted his attention to the flax-mills in the Manawatu district. A comprehensive report as to the inspections made in the various districts of the Dominion is published on page 85. In regard to ambulance outfits, it was found that a large number of the millowners had not made any provision. Steps were then taken by the Department by which suitable outfits have been made up in accordance with the requirements of the regulations and approved by the District Health Officer, and these outfits have been supplied to millers at wholesale rates.

It is pleasing to state that most of the employers called upon to do so have readily complied with the requisitions served upon them for the improvement of the accommodation provided for their workers. In a few instances where there were special circumstances warranting such concession, such as where flax was nearly cut out, or where the lease of cutting-rights had nearly expired, it has been necessary to give permission for the use of temporary accommodation. At a number of the mills where notices were served for improvements to be effected it has been found necessary to allow an extension of time within which to comply. It is a pleasure to report that a number of employers of flax-mill workers had prior to the receipt of requisitions under the Act already taken steps to provide improved accommodation for their workers, and some of these employers state that the extra expenditure incurred in that behalf has been more than compensated for by the fact that they have been enabled to secure a better class of workers. Photographic examples of some of the accommodation now provided accompany the report. In one case the men’s quarters are provided in three bungalows, each containing six bedrooms and a large sitting-room, the latter furnished with fire-