

(3.) A whaler was bailing oil from a vat when he slipped into the hot refuse left in the vat; he was badly scalded on both legs and other portions of his body, and died the following day. Instructions have been issued to provide platforms with suitable guard-rails for workers engaged in emptying the vats, and this has been done at all whaling-stations.

(4.) In a brickworks it was the practice to disconnect the belting running from the countershaft to the brick-press by means of a piece of timber. It is presumed that instead of following this practice an engineer attempted to remove the belting by means of his hands or feet, and was caught in the belt and carried around the shaft a number of times.

(5.) The son of the proprietor of a brewery fell into a vat containing water heated to about 190°. It is thought from the circumstances that the deceased was manipulating the tap of a barrel containing cold water and overbalanced, falling on to the top of the hot-water vat, which was partly covered by a board; the barrel of cold water also fell, and the additional weight broke the board, allowing the worker to fall in. He was found to be badly scalded about the hips and body; internal complications set in, with fatal results. Medical opinion at the inquest indicated that he would have recovered had it not been for the abdominal injuries sustained in a motor accident a few days previously.

(6.) A worker was engaged in dusting down an 11,000-volt switchboard, and proceeded to carry out this work on a portion of the equipment not included in his instructions; this caused him to come in contact with a "live" part of the switchboard. He sustained shock and severe burns, from which he died.

(7.) An employee in an electric-power house received a shock from a portable lamp which he was using, and died from heart-failure. This matter was dealt with by the Public Works Department under their regulations.

(8.) A worker in a fellmongery department of a freezing-works received a cut on his right hand; a few days later the wound became septic, and tetanus supervened, from which the worker died. This case was regarded as unusual, tetanus usually being conveyed from the ground and not likely to be contracted in fellmongery work.

(9.) A stoker in a gasworks was fatally scalded in the following manner: Under the firebars of the furnaces at the gasworks there was a pool formed by water which was allowed to trickle over the firebars to prevent them from burning too quickly; in front of the furnace was a pit, 6 ft. deep, which the deceased entered for the purpose of clinkering the fire; this pit gave access to the ashpit extending under the firebars of the furnace. The deceased removed four of the firebars, and it is surmised that the hot ashes fell suddenly into the water, causing a rush of steam and ashes to the outer pit where the deceased was standing. Immediately after the accident the Department issued safety notices to be posted in all gasworks, advising stokers to see that there is no water in the ashpits before removing the firebars for clinkering.

FACTORY HYGIENE.

In last year's report I mentioned that we had arranged with a number of occupiers of factories in the principal towns of the Dominion to keep returns of the temperature, humidity of the air, and other factors that are likely to affect the daily output of workers. These returns are not yet complete, the requisite hygrometers not having arrived from England early enough to give us a clear year's figures; some useful information should be available next year.

The First International Labour Conference, which met at Washington in October, 1919, as the result of portion of the Peace Treaty, resolved that the International Labour Office should draw up a list of the principal manufacturing processes that might be considered as unhealthy. That office has found it impossible to immediately compile an international list, but has decided to collect and publish all information that will enable experts and authorities to deal with unhealthy processes in the various countries. The first publication has just been issued and deals with several occupations that are likely to cause disease. Of those mentioned only two are carried on in New Zealand: (1) the use of mercury (by jewellers, electric-appliance manufacturers, scientific-implement makers, &c.); (2) the use of gas or gaseous fuels which may result in carbon-monoxide poisoning. It may be added that there is power in the Act to make regulations on the subject should the necessity be shown.

As a result of representations made by the tannery and woollen-mill employees, investigations were made during the year, in conjunction with the Health Department, into the question of chrome poisoning in these mills. It was found that several workers had suffered from eczema due to the handling of chromium preparations, but no cases of deep ulceration were found. Cautionary notices have, however, been issued for posting in factories where chrome poisoning is likely to occur, drawing the attention of employers and workers to the measures that should be taken to prevent poisoning and the methods of dealing with it should poisoning occur. Chrome ulceration has also been added to the list of diseases to which the Workers' Compensation Act applies.

As stated last year, inquiries were then being made into the large proportion of cuts received by workers in freezing-works that become septic. It was found that the cause of septic poisoning in many cases was neglect on the part of the workers to have the wounds properly cleansed and dressed. All these factories are required to provide first-aid appliances with the necessary antiseptics in order that the cuts that are so frequently received by slaughtermen may be properly treated. Cautionary notices have also been issued for posting in all factories, drawing attention to the results of neglect to have even slight cuts properly attended to, and also explaining the best methods of treatment.

WELFARE OF WOMEN WORKERS.

In the course of their general duties the women Factory Inspectors in the chief centres have paid attention to the welfare of women workers, and report an increase in the number of schemes of welfare instituted by factory and shop occupiers, largely in the direction of provision of rest-rooms,