

has been noted during the year in the use of tubular-steel scaffolding. Following the condemning of gear, a considerable improvement in swinging stages has been noted in one district.

(3) One fatal accident occurred during the year :—

A worker employed in demolishing a three-story brick building slipped and fell to the ground.

(a) *Annual Holidays Act, 1944*

(1) The majority of factories, offices, wholesalers, and merchants again closed down for at least two weeks over the Christmas - New Year period, the opportunity being taken by many firms to clean and overhaul machinery and plant during this period. More retail businesses engaged in the provision of essential services to the public remained open than in previous years, and closed down on the statutory holidays only. Transport services, hotels, restaurants, and accommodation houses were again taxed to their limits during this period.

(2) Few short-term employees were adversely affected by the close-down period, and in many cases it would be to their advantage. Many employers grant the holiday in advance and pay these workers in full for the fortnight's holiday on the understanding that they will return to work after the break and complete the full year's service. In some cases, however, the workers fail to return to work, or, if they do return, terminate their employment before the completion of a year's service, with the result that the employer has to bear the loss.

(3) The use of holiday cards in respect of short-term employment is still the subject of adverse criticism by employers and workers. Employers, particularly those in rural areas, object to the inconvenience entailed in obtaining stamps and entering cards, while most workers seem to prefer payment in cash and sometimes even refuse payment by way of stamps affixed to cards. Most workers object to the cards because of the necessity to wait twelve months before they can be cashed. The Post and Telegraph Department reports numerous cases of cards being fraudulently manipulated by workers to obtain payment before the amounts are due. During the period under review 38 persons were convicted for fraudulently altering cards for payment, 37 of these convictions being obtained by the Police Department.

(4) The following are particulars of the amounts paid by the Post and Telegraph Department on surrender of holiday cards in the last three years :—

Year.			Number of Transactions During Period.	Amount Paid Out During Period.		
				£	s.	d.
1947-48	..	..	40,812	62,428	10	1
1948-49	..	..	42,469	62,512	3	8
1949-50	..	..	42,162	63,159	8	10

(5) Section 2 (1) of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1949, makes it an offence under section 13 of the principal Act to lend money on the security of a holiday card, or, with intent to deceive, to alter one in any material particular. Section 2 (2) of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1949, makes it clear that an Inspector of Factories may sue for a penalty for an offence under the principal Act. Previously the Act had been construed as requiring an Inspector of Awards to take such action.

(6) Table XXIII in Appendix I shows that the alleged breaches by employers requiring investigation totalled 1,038, compared with 1,223 in 1948-49. Warnings issued totalled 815, compared with 775 in the previous year.