

The rates of wages for agricultural workers employed in orchards were also varied during the year : see Serial number 1944/13. These variations operated from 1st January, 1944, and were as follows (junior rates not shown) :—

	Old.			New.		
	Per Week.			Per Week.		
Permanent workers—	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Managers	4	9	0	5	0	0
Adult males	4	4	0	4	15	0
	Less 17s. 6d. if board and lodging is provided			Less 19s. 3d. if board and lodging is provided.		
Casual workers—	Per Hour.			Per Hour.		
	s.	d.		s.	d.	
Adult males	2	0		2	3	
Adult females	1	6½		1	9	

Other minor amendments were the extension of the additional rate of 3d. per hour for foremen to other workers taking control of grading or packing operations and the extension to female workers of the provisions regarding accommodation.

INSPECTIONS, ETC.

During the year, 802 inspections were made, 231 being of a general nature and the remainder in respect of accommodation, as follows : farms and stations, 146 ; dairy-farms, 28 ; shearers, 274 ; sawmills, 98 ; market gardens, 2 ; orchards, 3 ; and others, 20.

Seventy-one breaches were discovered by Inspectors, whilst 435 complaints of alleged breaches were received. In 140 cases it was found that no breach had been committed. Warnings were issued in 236 cases, and 8 prosecutions, resulting in 7 convictions and 1 dismissal, were instituted. Fines imposed amounted to £43 10s.

Permits to accept less than the minimum rates prescribed by Act or Extension Orders were issued in 280 cases (part-time employment, 13 males and 138 females ; inexperience, 11 males ; disability, 102 males ; other reasons, 16 males).

SCAFFOLDING AND EXCAVATION ACT

During the year, 6,337 notices of intention to erect buildings and scaffolding and to commence excavations were received (previous year, 2,113), and 7,014 inspections were made. There were 26 prosecutions, convictions being obtained in 21 cases and fines amounting to £63 10s. being imposed. Five cases were dismissed.

As the analysis of accidents for the 1942 calendar year was not available for publication in last year's annual report, preliminary figures are now given. *Age* : Under 16, 1 ; 16–20, 6 ; 21–24, 9 ; 25–34, 44 ; 35–44, 32 ; 45–54, 28 ; 55 and over, 21 ; not stated, 1 : total, 142. *Disability* : Fatal, 5 ; permanent partial, 3 ; temporary, 134. *Causes* : Fixed machinery, 9 ; vehicles, 1 ; poisonous or corrosive substances, 1 ; falls of persons, 52 ; stepping on or striking against fixed objects, 15 ; falling or otherwise moving objects, 11 ; falls of earth, 1 ; handling of object, 39 ; hand-tools, 10 ; miscellaneous, 3. *Time lost* : 2,958 days. *Total compensation paid* : £11,783 2s. 7d.

Preliminary details of accidents for the 1943 calendar year are—*Age* : 16–20, 6 ; 21–24, 3 ; 25–34, 20 ; 35–44, 22 ; 45–54, 20 ; 55 and over, 19 ; not stated, 1 : total, 91. *Disability* : Fatal, 4 ; permanent partial, 2 ; temporary, 85. *Causes* : Fixed machinery, 8 ; vehicles, 1 ; poisonous or corrosive substances, 1 ; falls of persons, 32 ; stepping on or striking against fixed objects, 7 ; falling or otherwise moving objects, 6 ; falls of earth, 1 ; handling of object, 20 ; hand-tools, 11 ; miscellaneous, 4. *Time lost*, 2,950 days. *Total compensation paid* : £4,523 12s. 11d.

Brief particulars of fatal accidents during the 1943 year are given hereunder :—

A carpenter engaged in dismantling scaffolding was struck on the head by a piece of 6 in. by 2 in. timber. There was no evidence as to where the timber fell from :

While superintending the lifting of a steel girder from a lorry to the ground a rigger was struck on the chest by the girder. The girder fell when an anchor to which a guy rope for the lifting-mast was attached pulled out of the ground, which had become soft with rainwater :

A painter fell through asbestos-cement roofing to a concrete floor below. Safeguards had been provided, and the cause of the fall could not be ascertained :

A worker slipped on a ceiling joist and strained back and kidneys :

A serious accident occurred during roofing operations, the roofing-material being asbestos cement. As a result of breakage of a sheet a worker fell 25 ft. to a concrete floor. There were no protective measures where the worker was employed, the roof being unsarked.

The number of accidents to workers due to the use of asbestos cement as a roof covering discloses a necessity for additional safeguards. Therefore the Department has insisted on the use of crawlers or duckboards for workers engaged on roofs where this material is used. It would appear that the only satisfactory method of protecting workers is to insist on sarking the roof with material of sufficient strength to prevent a person falling through the roof in the event of fracture of the asbestos-cement covering. There is no power under the Scaffolding and Excavation Act, 1925, to enable the Department to call for sarking to be used. The Standards Institute has been considering for some time Standard Specifications covering the use of asbestos-cement roofing-material and making provision for the use of sarking.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT

The number of offices registered has further decreased to 31. All appear to be well conducted. There has been an annual decrease since 1936–37, when the registrations totalled 110.

FAIR RENTS ACT, 1936

Every dwellinghouse—i.e., every house or part of a house let as a separate dwelling where the tenancy does not include any land other than the site of the dwellinghouse and a garden or other premises in connection therewith, but including any furniture that may be let therewith—in the Dominion is subject to the Act, no dwellinghouse being excluded by reason only that part of the premises is used