

(2) *Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 1947*.—With the passing of this Act wide changes were instituted in the provisions for compensation for accident arising out of and in the course of employment. The amending Act is somewhat complicated and the following account of the changes which it introduced is in summary form and much condensed.

(3) Part I of the Act is devoted to employers' indemnity. Its central feature (section 11) provides that the Government Accident Insurance Office (the Accident Branch of the State Fire Insurance Office) is to indemnify every employer in respect of liability under the Workers' Compensation Act, the Deaths by Accident Compensation Act, the Coal-mines Act, the Mining Act, the Law Reform Act, 1936, and liability at common law in respect of death or injury to a worker.

(4) Indemnity is stated in absolute terms and is not dependent on payment of a premium. Employers are, however, required, in consideration of the indemnity, to pay the requisite premium.

(5) There are machinery clauses dealing with the application of the Act, exemptions from its operation (applying to local authorities, Government Departments, Education Boards, and, on conditions, to certain insurers of a co-operative or mutual nature), financial arrangements, and administration. It is also provided that employers shall deliver wage statements to be used as a basis for assessing premiums, and there are administrative provisions dealing with these statements.

(6) The settlement of claims and conduct of proceedings is put into the hands of the Government Accident Insurance Office.

(7) The Government Accident Insurance Office is empowered to conduct research into the causes, incidence, and methods of prevention of accidents, injuries and diseases in respect of which compensation may become payable, and is also authorized to arrange occupational training for seriously disabled workers.

(8) Persons employed by insurance companies at the passing of the Act are made eligible for appointment, under certain conditions, to positions in the State Fire Insurance Office.

(9) Part I comes into operation on 1st April, 1949.

(10) Part II of the Act is devoted to amendments as to compensation.

(11) The amount of compensation payable in respect of the death of a worker is increased from 208 times the weekly earnings or £500, whichever is the larger, with a maximum of £1,000, to 250 times the weekly earnings or £750, whichever is the larger, with a maximum of £1,500. Weekly or lump-sum payments or damages on a common-law action paid to a worker prior to his death are not to be taken into account except to the extent to which they and compensation payable on death would exceed £1,750.

(12) In the event of the incapacity of a worker, lump-sum payments are to be computed at 3 per cent. and not, as at present, 5 per cent. compound interest. Lump-sum payments will thus be increased. The weekly payments are increased from 66 $\frac{2}{3}$  per cent. of the worker's weekly earnings, with a maximum of £4 10s. a week for not more than six years, with a total maximum of £1,000 to 75 per cent. of the weekly earnings, with maxima of £5 10s. a week and a total of £1,500, the six-yearly limitation for weekly payments being removed.

(13) In deciding on weekly earnings, the rates paid by the Minimum Wage Act, 1945, are to be used in certain cases—*e.g.*, that of a share farmer—instead of, as at present, the basic rate of wages fixed under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act, 1936.

(14) Sums paid to a worker to cover special expenses entailed by the nature of his employment are not to be taken into account in ascertaining weekly earnings.