

The expenses incurred by the Court of Arbitration on the Department's vote are as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Court of Arbitration	2,378	19	10
Conciliation Boards	1,696	15	2
	£4,075	15	0

The expenses of the Boards of Conciliation exceeded the estimate. Both the Wellington and Canterbury Boards have been called into requisition frequently, and have sat fairly regularly throughout the year. The Canterbury Board has for months been taking evidence in the farm-labourers' dispute throughout the industrial district. This dispute promises to be the most expensive to the Government of any yet dealt with by the Boards, as the number of witnesses examined and the places visited were very numerous. In the early stage of the proceedings a verbatim note was taken of the evidence, but as this was proving very costly the work was stopped, and a condensed report only was supplied daily. At the end of the period covered by this report the case was in full swing, and I feel it my duty to point out that I consider the proceedings might have been more expeditiously, more economically, and more systematically dealt with, as the class of evidence tendered by witness after witness was on the same lines. Had representative witnesses—say, six on each side—been chosen to give evidence, it should have sufficed to enable the Board to frame its recommendations. Whilst it is not wise to refuse evidence, those proffering it might have been confined to dealing with new points, instead of reiterating what had already been uttered over and over again by previous witnesses.

During November last the election took place for the employers' and workers' representatives on the Court of Arbitration. Mr. Samuel Brown, the employers' sitting representative, was elected unopposed, but the contest for the workers' seat was keenly fought, and resulted in the election of Mr. J. A. McCullough, of Christchurch, by a majority over Mr. R. Slater, the sitting member, of fourteen votes. For the position of deputy representative, Mr. Pryor and Mr. T. Young, of Wellington, were elected to represent the employers' and workers' unions respectively.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

Under this Act a very general and exhaustive inspection was made this year, no less than 1,133 sheds being visited throughout the Dominion. The Chief Inspector of Factories (Mr. Lomas) has dealt fully with this inspection, and details of the visits made in the various provinces are given at the end of this report.

It is claimed by shearers that in some respects our Act is not so far-reaching as those existing in Australian States. The Queensland Act is sometimes quoted as being very much in advance of our legislation. I would recommend for your consideration some of the sections contained in their Acts as being improvements on our Act.

It is pleasing to find that the shearer nowadays is reported by most employers to be superior to the shearer of a few years ago. The men performing this work not only do a better day's work, but expect to be treated with more consideration, especially in the matter of accommodation, than that formerly shown. Some employers have been successful, by showing fair and generous treatment to their shearers, in getting the same men year after year to perform their work, and the result has proved mutually satisfactory.

THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR ACCIDENTS ACT.

Seventy-three cases were taken before the Arbitration Court under this Act. A sum of £5,342 1s. 1d. was awarded to the widows and relations of persons fatally injured, whilst the sum of £1,774 13s. 6d. was paid to those partially incapacitated by accident. In addition, sixteen parties were awarded sums ranging from 4s. to £1 16s. per week until convalescence.

A return showing the cases dealt with under this Act is given in this report, together with a summary of the decision in each case. The reports of the cases as they are heard are regularly published in the Department's Journal, and are issued in a separate volume in February of each year, under the heading of "Decisions under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act."

One case might be mentioned here as of special interest. A worker who was suffering from disease of the mitral valve of the heart was engaged stacking bags of sugar. The strain of the work caused a shred of vegetation to become detached from the mitral valve, and to pass into circulation of the blood, and the worker suffered in consequence from a paralytic seizure. The Court held that this injury was an accident within the meaning of the Act, and that the worker was entitled to compensation (see Vol. vi, page 74, "Decisions under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act").