

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

Prior to the coming into force of the new scale of fees, which was gazetted on the 10th October last, very little difficulty was experienced in enforcing the provisions of the Act. Since the advent of the new scale of fees, which reduces the payment of the worker and increases payment of employer, there has been an inclination on the part of the registry-office keepers to charge the worker in full, and to charge employers only a nominal fee. I have had occasion to go through the whole of the registry-office keepers' books, and found that a number of errors and slight overcharges had been made. I insisted on a refund in each case, and warned them against committing any further breaches. There is one case to be heard by the Court, a registry-office keeper having charged a greater fee than allowed. Registry-office keepers complained bitterly at the time of coming into force of the new scale of fees of their inability to charge employers the full fee provided, the latter claiming that the amount charged would pay for half a dozen advertisements. A number of registry-office keepers have gone out of business, and at the present time only 12 registry-office keepers are in business in this district.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

Very little need be said by myself as to this Act this year, as the special Inspectors appointed by the Head Office to make a thorough and systematic inspection of all shearing-sheds covered most of the ground. Assistance was rendered by this office by making inspections in the districts within fairly easy reach, and where shearing had commenced before the arrival of the special Inspectors, 20 sheds being visited. In most instances some alteration or addition was required to bring them up to the requirements of the Act. In one case a Chinaman was employed, and no separate accommodation was provided. A notice has been served upon the station-owner to provide separate accommodation in future. The systematic inspection adopted last shearing season should have a very beneficial effect.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

This year has been an uneventful one, and little difficulty has been experienced in enforcing the provisions of the various awards and agreements. A considerable number of complaints from unions and others were inquired into, but in most cases either the person complained of was not a party to the award or agreement, or the offence was trivial and was settled by the payment of arrears of wages, &c. The complaint of the past by employers, of ignorance of the awards, can now hardly hold, seeing that all employers are supplied by the Department with a free copy.

I am pleased to say that the employment-books of the various unions are kept in better order than formerly, and more in conformity with the various awards.

Inquiries were made into 380 complaints, and in 126 cases it was thought necessary to apply for enforcement of award, or to accept arrears of wages in cases where the offence was trivial or where the offence was committed through ignorance. The sum of £92 12s. 9d. was collected from employers, and paid out to the different workers entitled to same.

There were 107 cases taken before the Court, convictions being obtained in 95, 6 being withdrawn and 6 dismissed. There are now 21 cases waiting to be adjudicated upon. Mr. Newton, the Assistant Inspector, did the majority of the work under this Act, and I found him a conscientious and earnest worker. Inquiries as to compliance with the awards were also usually made when visits of inspection under the Factories Act were made.

SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT.

There has been very little difficulty in the administration of this Act, and visits of inspection have been made by the Inspector to all buildings in course of erection in this district, and also several visits have been made to the other principal towns of Canterbury. The employers generally seem quite willing to comply with the provisions, and it has only been necessary for three contractors to be brought before the Court for failing to notify the Inspector of their intention to erect scaffolding.

A detailed report has been made by Mr. Stringer, the Inspector for this district.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACT.

The administration of this Act partly devolving upon this Department has naturally increased the work in respect to the erection of homes and selection of suitable sites for same.

Several visits of inspection of land offered to the Government for the purposes of erection of workers' homes have been made and reported upon to the Chief Advisory Officer, Wellington. There is every indication that for the 12 homes in course of erection at Sydenham there will be many applicants.

GENERAL.

During the year the correspondence has considerably increased, no less than 4,804 letters, 4,545 circulars, and 267 telegrams were despatched outwards.

Before concluding my report I desire to thank the District Health Department and also the city Inspectors for the assistance rendered in respect to the sanitation of factory premises. I also desire to sincerely thank the members of my own staff for their strict attention to their duties, and for their willingness to work overtime when pressure of work required.

I have, &c.,

W. H. HAGGER,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.