

powers conferred under section 25 of the Act should be exercised by the Governor-General in Council, on the grounds (1) that many employers had not availed themselves of the right to take apprentices to the full extent permitted; (2) that it did not seem reasonable that, in order to meet a pressure which in all probability will be temporary, an unlimited number of apprentices should be taken on, with the result that when conditions become again normal their apprentices, having served their apprenticeship, may find little or no demand for their services; also, it would be unfair to the apprentices themselves, as if their numbers were unlimited it is difficult to see how they could receive the teaching and experience necessary to make them efficient journeymen; (3) that the award in question would expire on the 5th June (five weeks after the report was made), when it was open for either of the parties to apply for a fresh award, and full opportunity would then be given to discuss the matter. This was the only application dealt with during the year.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Owing to the diminishing number of cases under this Act, due, possibly, as much to the well-settled state of the law on the subject as to the diminution in the ranks of the workers on account of the war, it has been considered unnecessary to continue the publication of the annual volume of decisions under this Act. The decisions that contain any points of importance are, however, fully reported in the "Gazette Law Reports" and the "New Zealand Law Reports," so that no inconvenience will result to the legal profession or to litigants from this measure of economy.

Cases of interest decided during the year are,—

Yeabsley v. Chairman, &c., of County of Kaikoura (1918, G.L.R. 171; 1918, N.Z.L.R. 313).—The worker in this case was killed by stepping off a motor-car (on which he had been given "a lift") thinking it had slowed down more than it had. He had not been directed to use this means of conveyance, but had been instructed to use all speed in his journey. Held, that the accident arose "out of and in the course of the employment."

In *Marsh v. Barton* (1918, G.L.R. 184) the principle is laid down that the question of dependency is one of fact, and the fact that a person is physically capable of earning sufficient wages in another vocation to render her quite independent is irrelevant, and cannot be taken into consideration in arriving at a conclusion as to whether such person was in fact dependent upon the deceased at the time of the accident which caused his death.

Mason v. Williams Bros. (1918, G.L.R. 208).—This was a case coming under section 4 of the amending Act of 1913, which provides that when an apprentice or an improver, or any person under twenty-one years of age, meets with an accident, his wages shall for the purpose of arriving at the rate of compensation be deemed to be that which he would, but for the accident, probably be able to earn as a journeyman. In this instance the wages of the apprentice were 17s. per week, while the compensation was based on the journeyman's rate of £3 6s.

The total number of cases dealt with by the Arbitration Court during the year was 42.

SHEARERS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

The reduction of the staff because of the war has prevented the Department from carrying out as full an inspection of shearing-stations in all districts as is desired. Inspectors have, however, inspected the accommodation for the workers employed at 293 shearing-stations, 131 sawmills, 141 flax-mills, and 116 farms; total, 681: and any complaints received during the year have been attended to in the course of these visits.

SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT.

The number of notices of intention to erect scaffolding received during the year has shown a heavy falling-off from last year's totals—viz., 706 as against 888. These figures give an indication of the effect of the war on the building trade in the various districts. The decrease was most apparent in the cities of Wellington, Christchurch, and Auckland, where the number of notices of intention to erect scaffolding fell by 64, 84, and 62 respectively. There was also a slight falling-off in Dunedin and some of the less important centres, while in some towns (particularly in Wanganui, Oamaru, and Napier) there were more notices received than was the case in the previous period. There were eight prosecutions, and a conviction was obtained in each case. Reports of fifty-five accidents on scaffolding were received. In one instance the victim died, but in most of the remaining cases the injury received was slight, and in no case was the accident due to faulty scaffolding or gear.

During the year the regulations under this Act have been amended and consolidated. The amendments are designed to secure stronger and safer scaffoldings and gear; they also give the Inspectors power to condemn and brand any scaffolding material that they may consider unsafe or unsuitable for use.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

No special comment is necessary respecting the administration of this Act. Inspections of the offices have been made, and particular note taken of the fees charged by the licensees. In no case was it found necessary to take proceedings for an offence under the Act.

FOOTWEAR REGULATION ACT.

Inspections of all stocks of footwear in warehouses, retail shops, and factories have been carried out by the Inspectors of Footwear. In only one case was it considered necessary to institute proceedings for infringement of the Act; the substantial penalty of £10 and costs was imposed.

The Inspectors have also assisted the officers of the Munitions and Supplies Department in supervising the manufacture of military footwear, and have also combined with the Customs Department in the inspection of basils and other leathers not required for military purposes.