

- (2.) Giving owners of houses built before the 3rd August, 1914, the right to 7 per cent. net interest on the valuation of their houses as at that date, if that rent would be higher than the rent previously charged, instead of 8 per cent. (inclusive of all expenses), which had been the maximum rate fixed irrespective of the age or materials of which the houses were constructed.
- (3.) The right was given to a tenant to recover rent paid by him in excess. This provision had not previously existed.
- (4.) Making all bonuses recoverable by tenants, whether received by the owner or by any other person, and making the receipt of bonuses an offence.
- (5.) Restricting the rent that may be charged by a tenant to a subtenant, by empowering a Magistrate to fix what he considers would be a fair rental, and giving an additional right of possession to the owner if his tenant has sublet at an unreasonable rent.
- (6.) Applying the Act to a room or rooms in the same way as to the whole of a house. (For various reasons, as stated in last year's report, this provision is difficult to operate unless precisely the same room or rooms with or without the same furniture has previously been let.)

As the Act of 1916 together with its several amendments has proved exceedingly complicated, the Department issued an explanatory memorandum in January last for public information.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

Following upon your instructions, and in view of the fact that on account of the war several of the present labour laws and their amendments require consolidation and certain amendments, legislation is under preparation relating to the following: Shops and offices, waterside employment, industrial conciliation and arbitration, apprentices, and factories.

STAFF NOTES.

The only alteration in the staffing of the Department during the year is the reduction of four, consequent upon the closing of the women's employment bureaux. Other reductions will probably be made shortly. Every effort in this and other directions has been made to effect economies.

EXPENDITURE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT DURING THE YEAR.

Salaries, cost-of-living bonus, temporary clerical assistance, allowance to officers performing higher duties, and allowance to police and other officers acting as departmental agents*	£	27,844
Advertising and publications		427
Fares, board and lodging, &c., advanced to persons proceeding to employment (see refunds below)		382
Fares (proportion of) contributed by Department to persons proceeding to employment (viz., 25 per cent. on railway fares)		78
Fees paid to assessors of Industrial Councils		2,476
Legal and witnesses' expenses (see refunds below)		298
Postage, telegrams, telephones, and rent of letter-boxes		2,328
Printing and stationery		4,991
Office requisites, fuel and lighting		516
Travelling allowances and expenses of Inspectors, members of Court of Arbitration, Conciliation Councils, &c., bicycles and motor-cycles, and maintenance of same		6,528
Upkeep of departmental residence		60
Miscellaneous expenditure—	£	
Arbitration Court and Conciliation Councils		347
General		101
		448
		46,376
Less refunds—		
Fares		128
Legal and witnesses' expenses		120
From Housing Account		1,588
		1,836
		£44,540

* Exclusive of the salaries of the Judge and members of the Court of Arbitration, £3,500, which are appropriated by special Act of Parliament.