

school, the Court of Arbitration may order a levy towards the cost thereof to be paid by all the employers in the industry and locality. When doing so the Court may lay down such conditions as it thinks fit, and may exempt any particular employer. The first case of the kind has recently arisen in the motor mechanics' industry in Auckland, which, it is stated, will be followed by those in the industry in other centres. The employers' representative stated that apprentices in the industry require certain instruction that cannot be given in an ordinary garage. On the agreement of the parties an order of the Court was made requiring each employer of apprentices to contribute 10s. per annum for each apprentice for two years for the purchase of equipment at the local technical college where classes are being held. The experiment is spoken of as the beginning of a new policy in industry, of which much may be expected in future, and the system has been commended to employers generally in other industries.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Sixty-two cases were heard and determined by the Court of Arbitration, none of which calls for special mention.

During the year an Order in Council was made declaring chrome ulceration to be a disease within the operation of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Proposed new legislation: A survey of the legislation in operation in other countries has now been made, and it is understood that it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill next session to effect some improvements in the existing law.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

The administration of this Act has again been carried out by the Department of Agriculture, whose Inspectors have greater facilities for carrying out country inspections.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT (INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION FOR FLAX AND SAWMILL WORKERS).

Very few complaints have been received during the year regarding accommodation for these workers. A large number of general inspections were made in the course of the annual general inspection of factories, &c., and ninety-two requisitions were served on proprietors for increased or improved accommodation, resulting in better conditions being provided for the workers affected.

SCAFFOLDING AND EXCAVATION ACT.

The new Act, which was passed in 1922, and which extended the former (Scaffolding Inspection) Act to cover all building operations, has been administered and complied with without much difficulty, builders and workers generally, with few exceptions, recognizing the necessity in the interests of safety of conforming to the requirements laid down.

During the year 6,023 notices of intention to erect buildings and scaffoldings were received (previous year, 4,863), and 16,760 inspections were made (previous year, 14,314). Building operations have been active, particularly in the North Island. In the chief cities buildings from one up to three stories in the business centres are gradually being replaced by modern structures of greater height, extending to seven, eight, and nine stories. This work involves the use of intricate hoisting-gear as well as scaffolding, and requires constant supervision. The tendency to erect slipshod scaffolding and to use faulty gear exists mostly with those builders or painters who carry on business in a small way, to whom the outlay for sound scaffolding material and plant is of more moment than to those engaged more extensively in the trade.

There were 319 accidents reported, an increase of 135 on the previous year. The number of serious (including fatal) accidents is fifteen, as compared with sixteen during the previous year. The cause of each accident was carefully investigated. It will be seen from the summary of the six fatal accidents below that in no case was the accident due to faulty or defective scaffolding or gear. This applies also to the nine serious but non-fatal accidents. Inspectors have nevertheless exercised the greatest vigilance over work of a hazardous nature in order to prevent accidents as far as possible. A large proportion of the accidents reported were very slight, such as cuts and splinters in the hand, which are not directly concerned with scaffolding. The increase in the total number which occurred is due to two causes—viz., an increase in the number of buildings and scaffoldings erected, and the continued extension of the inspections to country districts, resulting in many slight accidents being brought under notice which were formerly not reported. Particulars of the fatal accidents are as follows:—

(1.) A labourer was working on a ladder about 8 ft. from the ground, cutting the wiring of the boxing of some concrete-casing which was about 4 ft. 6 in. from the top rung of the ladder on which he was standing. It is surmised that the wire parted more easily than the worker anticipated, with the result that the boxing came away, causing the worker to lose his balance; he fell a distance of