

(5) Two men were killed and one seriously injured as a result of the collapse of a drying-kiln used for drying timber. The workers were placing uprights inside the kiln to take the strain of the roof while excavation was proceeding for the foundations of a new wall, when the roof collapsed, pulling the outside wall down with it and crushing the workers. There was no evidence of any neglect to take precautionary measures to prevent the collapse of the roof. At the inquest the Coroner added a rider to the verdict to the effect that when it was intended to demolish or alter a building it was desirable that the building should first be examined by the Inspector of Scaffolding. As the demolition of brick or stone buildings is dangerous work, it is suggested that the Act be amended to require notification of all such work.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are ninety-six offices registered in New Zealand—a decrease of eight. The usual visits of inspection were made during the year to see that the Act is generally complied with, and three persons were prosecuted for failing to obtain licenses.

RENT-RESTRICTION.

There were 345 applications received from tenants for inquiry (previous year, 551). The following table shows the results of the investigations (the figures in parentheses are those for the previous year):—

Place.	Total Number of Applications.	Number in which Rents demanded were reduced.		Number in which Rents demanded were deemed justified.		Number in which no Proceedings taken.*
		By Court.	At instance of Department without reference to Court.	By Court.	By Department without reference to Court.	
Auckland	47 (96)	..	9	..	12	26
Wellington	169 (302)	5	59	12	34	59
Christchurch	35 (28)	..	14	..	4	17
Dunedin	63 (58)	..	34	..	7	22
Hamilton	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gisborne	.. (1)	..	..	..	..	..
Napier	8 (22)	..	6	..	2	..
Masterton	1 (9)	..	..	..	1	..
New Plymouth	7 (5)	..	3	..	2	2
Wanganui	1 ..	..	..	..	..	1
Palmerston North	6 (10)	..	1	..	3	2
Nelson	.. (4)	..	..	..	..	..
Greymouth	2 (5)	..	1	..	1	..
Timaru	4 (5)	..	2	..	..	2
Oamaru	.. (3)	..	..	..	..	..
Invercargill	2 (3)	..	1	..	..	1
	345 (551)	5	130	12	66	132

* For example, cases found to be outside scope of Act, proceedings not desired by complainant, &c.

In addition to the above, six cases were not completed at the end of the year.

One case was also taken against a landlord for reletting a house after obtaining an order for possession on the ground that he required it for his own use. In this case the house had been immediately relet to another tenant at an increased rental. The Magistrate imposed a penalty of £10.

The rent-restriction provisions as hitherto in operation were continued by the Rent Restriction Continuance Act, 1927, until the 1st May, 1928. From that date this Act provides (1) that the standard rent shall be determined on the basis of 7 per cent. on the capital value of the dwellinghouse as at the date of such determination (instead of on the 1914 value), exclusive of rates, insurance, repairs, and depreciation (as before); (2) that the Act shall cease to operate except where, on the application of the tenant, a Magistrate otherwise orders; in deciding the question the Magistrate shall have regard to the greater hardship that may be caused to either party concerned.

It should again be noted that, in any case, the Act does not apply to houses first let after the 9th November, 1920.

As the Act of 1916, together with the various amendments made to date, is exceedingly complicated, a further statement setting out the present position of the law has been issued for general information.

FOOTWEAR REGULATION ACT.

There were 2,766 general inspections made throughout the Dominion under this Act, and stocks of footwear were carefully examined. There were four prosecutions, and three convictions, and fines totalling £4 were ordered.