

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

The Inspectors of the Agriculture Department again carried out all necessary inspections under this Act, and it was found that on the whole the accommodation provided was satisfactory. In a number of cases, however, particularly as regards the older buildings, it was found that alterations and improvements were needed, but in view of the present financial stringency owners were not called on to incur expenditure for this purpose, unless, of course, the accommodation was distinctly unfit or insanitary. No prosecutions were taken and no complaints were received regarding the nature of the accommodation provided.

SCAFFOLDING AND EXCAVATION ACT.

During the year 3,053 notices of intention to erect buildings and scaffoldings and to commence excavations were received, and 13,508 inspections were made.

There was one prosecution, a conviction being recorded; fine £2 10s.

The number of accidents that occurred during the year ending 31st December, 1931, is 201 (of which 7 were fatal). Of the 201 accidents, 187 were of a minor nature. It should be mentioned that the total includes not only accidents to workers on scaffolding or in connection with gear or excavations, but also all other accidents occurring in connection with building operations. Taking into consideration the hazardous nature of the work and the large number of workers involved, the number of accidents due to falls from scaffolds, ladders, or roofs is small—viz., 18. The numbers according to occupations are: Labourers, 81; carpenters, 63; painters, 3; steelworkers, 4; plasterers, 7; bricklayers, 3; plumbers, 3; unclassified, 37.

The following are particulars of the fatal accidents reported:—

(1) A labourer was engaged in trimming the walls of a sewer tunnel preparatory to its being lined with concrete when he stepped back to avoid a fall of sandstone; he tripped over the hose attached to the drill and struck his head on the tram-rail.

(2) A rigger was being hoisted on a platform to do some work on a tower used for distributing concrete to various parts of a building under construction when the galvanized steel rope supporting the platform parted, and he fell a distance of 113 ft. to the ground. No explanation could be given of the cause of the break. The rope was one with an estimated breaking-strain of over 6 tons, and the load at the time of the accident was less than 1 ton.

(3) A master plumber was inspecting a roof which had been painted with graphite paint when he slipped and fell to the ground sustaining fatal head injuries.

(4) A labourer was engaged in timbering the sides of a sewerage trench 17 ft. deep, when one side of the trench collapsed. The worker was buried beneath the spoil and died of suffocation.

(5) A worker was employed in the demolition of a building and was removing bricks from a wall to free the end of a girder when he overbalanced and fell a distance of 40 ft. to the ground.

(6) A carpenter was engaged on a scaffold on the second story of a building, when he was thrown off his balance by a sudden gust of wind and fell beneath the guard rail to the floor, a distance of approximately 10 ft. He died some hours later from shock following head injuries.

(7) A labourer who was in charge of a lift used for hoisting trucks of soil out of a 60 ft. shaft apparently in a moment of forgetfulness pushed an empty truck over the edge of the shaft while the lift was at the bottom. The worker fell with the truck sustaining fatal injuries.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are eighty-one offices registered in New Zealand, all of which appear to be satisfactorily conducted.

RENT RESTRICTION.

There were 218 applications from tenants for inquiry (previous year, 120). 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 ..	17 (16)	..	8	..	3	6
Wellington ..	149 (59)	2	33	..	35	79
Christchurch ..	20 (19)	1	4	..	8	7
Dunedin ..	5 (4)	..	3	..	..	2
Other towns ..	27 (22)	..	6	..	8	13
	218 (120)	3	54	..	54	107

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