

If due regard is paid to the hazardous nature of the work due to height from the ground and the limited space for workers to operate, the number of accidents due to falls from scaffolds, ladders, or roofs is small—viz., 38. The number of accidents according to occupations were: Labourers, 101; carpenters, 74; steelworkers, 8; bricklayers, 4; joiners, 4; plasterers, 4; unclassified, 19.

Information as to time lost and compensation paid shows in regard to the cases in which details are available that a total of 4,369 days were lost and compensation to the amount of £7,286 13s. 7d. was paid.

The following are particulars of the fatal accidents reported:—

A labourer while wheeling concrete along a barrow-run slipped and fell, sustaining serious back injuries, which later proved fatal. Proceedings were taken against the employer for failing to give notice of intention to commence building work incurring a risk of a fall of 12 ft. or more and for setting up a barrow-run two planks wide instead of not less than three planks wide as required by the Scaffolding Regulations, penalties being imposed on both charges.

A carpenter working on a scaffold built round a hoist tower, for some unknown reason, put his head inside the tower and sustained fatal head injuries as a result of being struck by the descending hoist platform.

A foreman engaged at the bottom of a sewerage excavation from 10 ft. to 12 ft. deep, was buried when the side of the excavation, which was not properly timbered, collapsed. The worker was dead when extricated two hours later. Proceedings were instituted against the employer and a penalty was imposed on him for failing to give notice of intention to make an excavation more than 5 ft. in depth.

A steelworker engaged on the erection of an oil-tank overbalanced and fell 40 ft. to the bottom of the tank, sustaining fatal injuries.

While a reinforced-concrete pile was being "stripped" to a certain level by means of explosives, a labourer who was over 100 yards away, was struck on the back of the head by a small piece of the concrete and sustained fatal injuries.

A carpenter, while engaged in the construction of the roof of a building, accidentally stepped back and fell through the ceiling-joists, a distance of 10½ ft., to the ground. He struck his head on a concrete surround, sustaining injuries, which subsequently proved fatal.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There are 78 offices registered in New Zealand (last year 92). No prosecutions were necessary during the year for breach of this statute, and the offices appear to be satisfactorily conducted. The number of offices registered has decreased from 110 for the year 1936-37 to 78 for the year 1938-39.

FAIR RENTS ACT, 1936.

This Act, the currency of which was extended by the Statutes Amendment Act, 1938, to 30th September, 1939, applies to dwellinghouses that are let at a rental not exceeding £156 a year. The Act (as amended by the Amendment Act, 1937), which binds the Crown and which does not apply to any dwellinghouse first let after the passing of the legislation (11th June, 1936), or to premises forming part of a building originally designed and constructed for the purpose of being let as more than two separate flats or apartments, prevents any increase in a tenants' rent during the tenancy except where a fair rent is determined in accordance with the Act. Any such increase can be enforced only pursuant to a Magistrate's order or pursuant to an agreement in writing between the landlord and the tenant and approved by the Inspector of Factories.

A Magistrate may determine a fair rent for any dwellinghouse on the application of either the landlord or the tenant. The fair rent is to be such rent as, in the opinion of the Magistrate, it is fair and equitable for the particular tenant to pay, having regard to any hardship likely to be inflicted on the tenant or the landlord and to all other relevant considerations. The fair rent is not to be higher than the rent paid by the tenant on 27th November, 1935, or any lower rent that has been payable since that date, unless the landlord proves that that rent is, in the circumstances, too low. Regulations may be made providing for the fixing of the fair rent at an amount equal to a percentage of the capital value of the dwellinghouse (not less than 4 per cent. nor more than 6 per cent. per annum), together with the outgoings for rates, insurance, and repairs, and the amounts (if any) to be allowed for depreciation and as rent of furniture. Such regulations may apply generally or in respect of specified parts of New Zealand or specified classes of dwellinghouses. No such regulations have been issued to date.

The fair rent may be altered from time to time, and applies only so long as the tenancy lasts, but a new fair rent may be determined for any subsequent tenancy.

Other provisions empower the Court to order a refund of what it considers to be excessive rent paid during the six months immediately before a fair rent is determined, declare any rent in excess of the fair rent to be irrecoverable, enable a tenant to recover (or deduct from future rent) any rent that he has paid in excess of that payable under the Act, and prohibit the charging of fines or premiums for letting houses to which the Act applies.

It is required that fourteen days' notice be given to the tenant before proceedings for possession are commenced, while the grounds on which possession of a dwellinghouse may be obtained are restricted, and the Court is authorized to refuse an order for possession where it is not satisfied that the landlord would suffer greater hardship from the refusal of an order than the tenant would suffer by reason of the grant of an order. Section 63 of the Finance Act, 1937, contained special provisions relating to ejectment, and provided that the Court shall not make an order for ejectment where possession is sought on the grounds that an agreement for sale has been entered into, the purchaser