


One of the cases, for failing to notify the Inspector of an accident, was dismissed. From the evidence given in Court it was found that the defendant had notified the Inspector as soon as the effects of the accident became known to him (the man had continued to work for several days after the occurrence of the accident).

It is pleasing to report that the provisions of the Act are generally loyally observed, and I hope to find the prosecutions for offences decrease from year to year.

The accidents reported under the Act total 126 (last year 124), and the following table classifies them according to their severity:—

District.	Slight.	Moderate.	Serious.	Fatal.	Total.
Northern	50	..	3	2	66
Taranaki	11	1
Wellington	21	8	3	1	33
Nelson	1	1
Westland	1	1	..	1	3
Canterbury	7	6	1	1	15
Otago and Southland ..	2	4	1	..	7
 Totals	82	31	8	5	126

Over 65 per cent. of the accidents are slight—that is, necessitating very little loss of employment. There were five fatal accidents (the same total as last year). Particulars regarding these are as follow: A bricklayer's labourer at Greymouth was seized with a fit whilst 8 ft. up a ladder, and fell to the ground; a builder's labourer at Auckland, whilst assisting to place a stone on top of a wall, overbalanced and fell 60 ft.; a labourer, also at Auckland, whilst demolishing a building had his skull fractured through a case falling on him; a labourer, at Christchurch, when engaged in demolishing a building, was killed by a fall of a brick wall; a builder, at Dannevirke, whilst hauling up timber to the top of a verandah, overbalanced and fell to the footpath.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

There were four prosecutions under this Act. Two were for charging more than the prescribed fees, one for failing to keep proper books, and one for conducting an office without a license. Convictions were obtained in all four cases. Generally the offices have been well conducted.

The inspection of books by our officers discloses that, notwithstanding the alteration in the scale of fees prescribed by regulation in October, 1907, fixing lower fees for workers and higher for employers, in many registry-offices the workers alone are charged the prescribed fees, whilst the employers are either not charged at all for the services rendered or pay only a very small fee.

Under the original regulations the fees chargeable to workers ranged from 1s. to 10s. and to employers from 1s. to 5s. according to the wages to be paid; and it was found that while workers were called upon to pay the fees, employers were seldom charged: hence the revised scale fixing the fees at from 1s. to 5s. for workers and from 2s. to 10s. for employers. Of course, registry-office keepers are at liberty to charge either employer or worker any fee up to that prescribed or none at all if they choose, but the fact that the workers may *generally* be said to be charged the full fees while the employers are seldom charged calls for notice.

The following table shows particulars of the number of engagements, the amounts paid respectively by employers and workers, &c. It should perhaps be explained in connection with the figures shown in the table that it has been found in a number of cases that, although employers may be shown as having been charged fees, the fees are not collected. The usual course followed appears to be that while workers engaged pay their fees at the time of engagements even when they do not actually take up work, or at any rate do not stay at work more than a few days, employers do not pay any fees at the time of engagements, but are charged in regular accounts, and charges are probably not made at all when workers do not stay. Then employers are frequently charged at a less rate on account of the number of engagements made; also when the work consists of short jobs. These remarks do not, of course, account for the considerable number of instances in which no fee at all is charged to employers. With slight exceptions the fees payable by employers should be double the amount payable by workers.