

ARREARS OF WAGES.

Amounts totalling £36,044 2s. (last year £33,854 19s. 5d.) were collected by the Department's officers on behalf of workers who had been underpaid the wages prescribed by awards and the various Acts, while further amounts of such arrears, totalling £8,613 10s. 2d. (last year £36,865 15s. 7d.) were paid by employers, at the instance of the Inspectors, directly to the workers concerned: total £44,657 12s. 2d. (last year £70,720 15s.). The high total for last year was due to the operation of the Finance Act, 1936, and adjustments consequent upon the increased minima provided for workers in factories, shops, &c. A decrease for this year was anticipated, as the bulk of the adjustments had been effected.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

During the year sixty-five cases were heard and determined by the Court of Arbitration (previous year fifty-eight).

The more important decisions, with a digest thereof, are published in "New Zealand Workers' Compensation Cases," which is issued annually by the Department.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT, 1936.

As mentioned last year, provision was made in the above Act to prevent the discontinuance of weekly payments of compensation to workers except, *inter alia*, where a medical committee certifies that the worker is fit for work or where the worker without sufficient justification refuses or neglects to submit himself for examination by such committee. During the year medical committees were appointed in thirteen districts, and regulations were issued prescribing the procedure to be adopted in connection with the examination of injured workers by such committees.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT, 1919, AND AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ACT, 1936.

ACCOMMODATION.

The following inspections of accommodation under the above Acts were made during the year :—
Accommodation for—

Farm workers	..	..	..	..	..	..	493
Orchard workers	..	..	..	..	..	..	226
Sawmill workers	..	..	..	..	..	..	191
Shearers	..	..	..	..	..	..	883
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,793

As a result of the inspections, 902 requisitions requiring improvements were served—farm workers, 178; orchard workers, 126; sawmill workers, 173; and shearers, 425.

REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT ON DAIRY-FARMS, ORCHARDS, AND FARMS AND STATIONS.

The Agricultural Workers Act, 1936, fixed minimum wages based on age for employees on dairy-farms and provided for revision following alteration of the guaranteed price for dairy-produce. Upon the determination of the guaranteed price for the 1937–38 season the wages-rates were reviewed, and amended rates were prescribed by the Agricultural Workers' Wage Fixation Order, 1937 (Serial Number 273/1937), which operated from the 1st November, 1937. An increase of 2s. 6d. a week (to £2 5s.) was provided for workers of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, with smaller increases for workers below that age. The new rates were automatically applicable to the extension orders applying to agricultural workers on farms and stations used for the commercial production of wool, meat, and/or grain (including seed).

Section 20 of the Act gave power to extend the provisions relating to remuneration and conditions of employment on dairy-farms with modifications where necessary, subject to such proposed extensions being first submitted to the organizations (if any) of workers affected and their employers. As some organizations had agreed upon certain clauses that related to matters not provided for in the Act and were desirous of having such clauses included in an extension order, the Agricultural Workers Amendment Act, 1937, was passed, empowering the inclusion of any terms agreed to by the organizations of workers and their employers. Following the passing of the amending Act, effect was given to an agreement arrived at in respect of orchard workers, the Order in Council being issued as the Agricultural Workers Extension Order, 1938 (Serial Number 1938/22), which replaced the Agricultural Workers Extension Order, 1937 (Serial Number 130/1937).

During April, 1938, an extension order was issued covering agricultural workers in market gardens (including market gardens where soft fruit is produced), but this is limited in its application to the Wellington and Nelson Industrial Districts (Serial Number 1938/53.)

A further amendment of the Act was effected by section 3 of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1937. This provides that any agricultural worker employed on a dairy-farm may agree with his employer to be allowed leave from work between milkings on one day in each week of his employment instead of being allowed a half-holiday from noon for the remainder of the day, and if such leave is allowed it shall be deemed to be equivalent to a half-holiday.