

The number of new contracts registered for the year ended 31st March, 1941, was 1,974, and is a reduction of 866 on the previous year. Of this a reduction of 349 occurred in trades associated with motor-vehicle building or repairing and a reduction of 329 in trades associated with the building industry. The number of new apprentices to the carpentering and joinery trade was increased considerably from 1937, partly as a result of the expanded building activity and partly because of special efforts made to provide additional workers in this industry. Figures for two or three years past have therefore been somewhat larger than normal. Details are: 1934-35, 95; 1935-36, 165; 1936-37, 278; 1937-38, 475; 1938-39, 511; 1939-40, 510; 1940-41, 273.

Pursuant to the Suspension of Apprenticeship Emergency Regulations 1939 (Serial number 1939/154), contracts of apprenticeship are suspended during the currency of service with the armed forces. An unknown number of the contracts recorded above are presumably suspended pursuant to this provision. To overcome the difficulty of the proportion of apprentices to journeymen an amendment to the regulations (Serial number 1940/208) enables the Industrial Emergency Council, in its discretion, to authorize the engagement of another apprentice in substitution for the apprentice whose contract is suspended, even though such engagement infringes the proportion clause. This same amendment regularizes the arrangements referred to in the last report regarding the crediting of trade experience secured while in the armed forces. During the year ended 31st March, 1941, the Industrial Emergency Council dealt with 45 applications to employ apprentices in excess of the proportion, approval being given in 44 cases.

#### ARREARS OF WAGES.

Amounts totalling £17,183 0s. 3d. (last year £25,008 8s. 7d.) 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 £17,915 14s. 9d. (last year £24,864 9s. 2d.) were paid by employers at the instance of the Inspectors directly to the workers concerned: total, £35,098 15s. (last year £49,872 17s. 9d.).

Several statutes empower the Inspector of Factories, acting in the name and on behalf of the person entitled to payment, to take civil proceedings for the recovery of wages due. Inspectors took seventy-seven such cases during 1940-41, judgments being secured to the amount of £379 7s. 3d.

#### WAGES PROTECTION AND CONTRACTORS' LIENS ACT.

Under the 1908 Act the employer or contractor had a duty to retain in his hands one-fourth part of the money payable under the contract, a duty that had been interpreted by the Courts as meaning one-fourth of the money immediately payable. A section in the Statutes Amendment Act, 1940, makes it clear that under the 1939 Act the duty is to retain one-fourth of so much of the contract price as has for the time being become immediately payable or as would be so payable but for a provision inserted in the contract or sub-contract to secure its retention in conformity with the Act. The wording of the 1939 Act could have been construed as imposing a duty at all times to retain one-fourth part of the contract price, thus restricting considerably the amount payable as "progress payments."

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

A section in the Statutes Amendment Act, 1940, brought the New Zealand Workers' Compensation Act, 1922, into line with the English law, as it has existed since 1923, in respect of fatal or serious accidents where the worker at the time of the accident was, while acting for the purposes of and in connection with his employer's trade or business, nevertheless acting in contravention of any statute or of any statutory or other regulation applicable to his employment or of any orders given by or on behalf of his employer, or without instructions from his employer. Such an accident is now deemed to have arisen out of and in the course of the employment.

Another section gives to the Warden, where an injured miner who elects to take proceedings for damages in the Wardens' Court constituted under the Mining Act, 1926, fails on his claims, the same jurisdiction as the Supreme Court or a Magistrate in similar circumstances to award compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act, 1922.

During the year 143 cases were heard and determined by the Compensation Court (previous year 71).

Orders in Council have been issued as follows declaring diseases to be within the operation of the Act :—

3rd April, 1940	..	Cyanide rash.
19th February, 1941	..	Epitheliomatous cancer, or ulceration of the skin, due to tar, pitch, bitumen, mineral oil or paraffin, or any compound, product, or residue of any of these substances.
		Ulceration of the corneal surface of the eye, due to tar, pitch, bitumen, mineral oil or paraffin, or other compound, product, or residue of any of these substances.
3rd July, 1941	..	Miners' mineral rash.