

TRAINING OF APPRENTICES IN THE ELECTRICAL TRADE.

The Industrial Emergency Council dealt with a request for variation of the clause in several apprenticeship orders fixing the proportion of apprentices to journeymen in the electrical trade. During the investigations members were alarmed by the low education standard disclosed, also the poor percentage of passes in the examinations held by the Electrical Wiremen's Registration Board. A special conference representative of the Council, the Department, the Education Department and technical schools, the Electrical Wiremen's Registration Board, and workers' and employers' organizations was convened, and as a result a system of half-yearly reports from employer and technical school has been arranged in the electrical trade. These reports will be available to parents, also Apprenticeship Committees, and in addition employers and schools will have exchange reports.

AMENDMENT OF MASTER AND APPRENTICE ACT, 1908.

Government hydro-electric apprentices were unable to obtain sufficient experience in the actual wiring of houses to enable them to obtain their Wiremen's Registration License. This amendment (which was contained in the Statutes Amendment Act, 1941) allows them to be transferred temporarily to outside employers so that they may get the necessary experience. It also enables outside apprentices to be transferred temporarily to Government employment so that any question that may arise regarding the proportion of apprentices to journeymen may be overcome.

ARREARS OF WAGES.

Amounts totalling £15,922 19s. (last year, £17,183 0s. 3d.) 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 £18,766 7s. 8d. (last year, £17,915 14s. 9d.) were paid by employers at the instance of the Inspectors directly to the workers concerned: total, £34,689 6s. 8d. (last year, £35,098 15s.).

Inspectors of Factories also took civil proceedings in twenty-nine cases for recovery of wages due to workers, judgments being secured to the amount of £173 14s. 3d.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

During the year additional diseases have been declared to be diseases within the operation of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1922. Opportunity was also taken to consolidate the various declarations, which now appear in the regulations series (Serial number 1942/104). The following additional diseases were added:—

Poisoning by benzine or any of its homologues, and the sequelæ.

Manganese poisoning.

Poisoning by any nitro- or amido- derivative of benzine or any of its homologues (trinitrotoluene, anilin, and others), and the sequelæ.

Poisoning by any of the halogen derivatives of hydrocarbons of the aliphatic series.

Poisoning by any substance used as or in conjunction with a solvent for acetate of cellulose, and its sequelæ.

Pathological manifestations due to X-rays or radium or any other radio-active substance.

Dermatitis or ulceration of the skin or ulceration of the mucous membrane of the nose or mouth due to dust, liquids, or other external agents present in the specific process or processes of the worker's occupation.

Employment of children under fifteen years on farms is prohibited by the Agricultural Workers Act, 1936. It being anticipated that as a patriotic effort boys and possibly girls under this age may seek employment on farms during school-holiday periods, it was thought desirable to extend workers' compensation protection to them. This was effected by the Workers' Compensation Emergency Regulations 1941 (Serial number 1941/237).

During the year, 122 cases were heard and determined by the Compensation Court (previous year, 143).

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ACT, 1936, AND SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT, 1919, ALSO SHARE-MILKING AGREEMENTS ACT, 1937.

An extension order fixing conditions of employment for agricultural workers employed in the tobacco industry came into operation on 1st October, 1941 (Serial number 1941/197). Otherwise Extension Orders are as reported previously. Pursuant to the Labour Legislation Emergency Regulations 1940, a suspension order (Serial number 1941/206) was issued to have effect from 6th November, 1941. This fixed wages for female agricultural workers of eighteen years and over who are employed on dairy-farms or on farms and stations used for the commercial production of wool, meat, and/or grain (including seed) and who have been selected for such employment by an organization authorized in that behalf by the Minister of National Service.

The Agricultural Workers Labour Legislation Modification Order (Serial number 1941/206) modified the provisions of section 13 of the Agricultural Workers Act, 1936, to the extent that boys under the age of fifteen years may be employed as agricultural workers on dairy-farms in certain circumstances. Supervision of the boys and their employment is undertaken by Child Welfare Officers and Inspectors of Factories acting in co-operation.

During the year complaints were received respecting 60 alleged breaches of the Act. There were 8 prosecutions. Fines imposed amounted to £12 10s. Apart from the above, inspections were made of 189 properties. Warnings issued totalled 218.

Inspections of accommodation were also made as follows: Farm workers, 32; dairy-farms, 50; shearers, 306.

Permits to accept less than the minimum rates prescribed by Act or extension orders were issued in 527 cases (part-time employment, 8 males, 289 females; inexperience, 22 males, 7 females; disability, 157 males, 4 females; other reasons, 39 males, 1 female).