

AMENDMENT TO AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ACT, 1936, AND TO THE SHARE-MILKING AGREEMENTS ACT, 1937

By sections 4 and 75 of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1945, provision is made for reference to the Court of Arbitration of matters in dispute where organizations of workers and employers conferring in terms of subsection (2) of section 20 of the Agricultural Workers Act, 1936, and of sections 4 and 5 of the Share-milking Agreements Act, 1937, have been unable to reach agreement. The Court may hear representations in relation to the proposals and the matters in dispute and may make a recommendation thereon to the Minister of Labour. The Court, in the exercise of these powers, is deemed to act in the capacity of an arbitrator rather than in its ordinary judicial capacity, but nothing in the Arbitration Act, 1908, is to apply and nothing in either section is to be construed to limit the powers of the Court in the exercise of its functions for the purpose of the sections.

SCAFFOLDING AND EXCAVATION ACT

During the year, 3,980 notices of intention to erect buildings and scaffolding and to commence excavations were received (previous year, 3,989) and 6,842 inspections were made (previous year, 7,088). There were 35 prosecutions, convictions being obtained in 31 cases, and fines amounting to £84 being imposed.

Preliminary details of accidents for the 1945 calendar year are—*Age* : 16–20, 9 ; 21–24, 10 ; 25–34, 27 ; 35–44, 21 ; 45–54, 16 ; 55 and over, 16 ; not stated 1 ; total, 100. *Disability* : permanent partial, 2 ; temporary, 98. *Causes* : fixed machinery, 8 ; poisonous or corrosive substances, 1 ; falls of persons, 24 ; stepping on or striking against fixed objects, 8 ; falling or otherwise moving objects, 5 ; handling of objects, 37 ; hand tools, 16 ; miscellaneous, 1. *Time lost* : 2,405 days. *Total compensation paid* : £1,836 5s. 9d. (Previous years : 1942, 142 accidents, £11,783 2s. 7d. compensation ; 1943, 91 accidents, £4,523 12s. 11d. compensation ; 1944, 132 accidents, £3,535 9s. 9d. compensation.) There were no fatal accidents during the year.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT

There are 31 offices registered (last year, 28). This is the first annual increase since 1936–37, when the registration totalled 110. No complaints were received during the year and it would appear from the inspections carried out that the provisions of the Act are being complied with.

FAIR RENTS ACT, 1936

Every dwellinghouse—*i.e.*, every house or part of a house let as a separate dwelling where the tenancy does not include any land other than the site of the dwellinghouse and a garden or other premises in connection therewith, but including any furniture that may be let therewith—in the Dominion is subject to the Act, no dwellinghouse being excluded by reason only that part of the premises is used as a shop or office or for business, trade, or professional purposes, though premises let at a rent that includes payments in respect of board, and licensed premises within the meaning of the Licensing Act, 1908, are excluded. If the premises are not let as a dwellinghouse, however, their use as a dwellinghouse does not bring them within the provisions of the Act.

The term “basic rent” means, with reference to a dwellinghouse let as such on the 1st day of September, 1942, the rent payable as on that date, and with reference to a dwellinghouse that was not let on that date, the rent that was last payable before that date or, in the case of any premises first let as a dwellinghouse after that date, the rent first payable in respect thereof. Increases on the basic rent are possible in two ways—namely, as a result of a determination by a Magistrate of a fair rent that is higher than the basic rent, or as a result of an agreement in writing between the landlord and the tenant, this agreement requiring the written approval of the Inspector of Factories. Apart from amounts so authorized, increases in the basic rent are