

and, further, that it shall be deemed to have been total unless it is proved to have been partial only. The Court held, therefore, that some compensation must in either event be awarded, but as the dependancy was merely nominal a nominal sum of £5 was awarded as compensation. (*Public Trustee v. McMahon and another*: Vol. xii, pp. 37, 40.)

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT, 1913.

This measure effects a number of minor alterations upon the principal Act. The chief of them are as follow:—

Section 2: The sum of £20, allowed in the case of the death of a worker under section 4 of the principal Act for medical or surgical attendance and for funeral expenses, is increased by the amendment to £50.

Section 4 provides for a more liberal compensation in the case of young persons who meet with accidents than is prescribed by section 9 of the principal Act. The intention of section 9 was that when a young person meets with an accident his compensation should be based not merely upon the rate of his earnings as a young person, but upon the wages that he would be likely to receive as an adult. Section 4 of the amendment extends this provision to those workers over twenty-one years of age who, by reason of being apprentices or improvers, are also receiving low rates of wages.

In order to obviate delay as much as possible section 7 makes provision, when the parties to an action for compensation so agree, that the claim may be settled by a Magistrate instead of awaiting a sitting of the Court of Arbitration.

As already explained on page 22, section 11 increases the rate of compensation for the loss of an eye from 30 per cent. to 50 per cent. of the compensation for total incapacity.

SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT.

During the year 1,488 notices of intention to erect scaffolds were received; all of the structures were inspected, many on several occasions.

Extracts from the reports of the Inspectors appointed under the Act appear on page 38 of this report. They show that under the constant supervision of the Inspectors the requirements of the Act have been well observed, and with few exceptions the scaffolds used by workmen are constructed of sound materials and are erected in a workmanlike manner. Owing no doubt to the vigilance of the Inspectors, the tendency to use defective gear is happily decreasing, and appears to be generally confined to employers performing small jobs on buildings lasting for a few days only. In this connection it is pleasing to record that, although nearly five hundred scaffolds were erected during the year in the City of Christchurch, not one accident was recorded as being suffered by any of the workmen employed thereon.

ACCIDENTS.

The accidents reported under the Act total seventy-seven (last year 118), and the following classifies them according to their severity: Slight, 51; moderate, 17; serious, 6; fatal, 3: total, 77.

The circumstances in which the three fatal accidents occurred were as follow: A carpenter fell 20 ft. through a well-hole; a labourer fell off a ladder from a height of 12 ft.; a worker employed upon concrete foundation work was killed by a wall which gave way and fell in.

PROSECUTIONS.

There were twenty-four prosecutions taken before the Court under this Act, for the following offences:—

Failing to notify Inspector of intention to erect scaffolding over 16 ft. in height	20
Permitting use of ladder which did not extend at least 5 ft. beyond the level to which such ladder was intended to afford access	1
Failing to report accidents	3
Total	24

Of the twenty-four cases, two were dismissed—the first as it was not proved that defendants had control of the work (the employees having been “borrowed” for the job), and the second as the defendant had only lately taken over the contract; in this case the Magistrate warned defendant to be more careful in future regarding his obligations under the Act.