

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT

Awards of the Court of Arbitration 96 (last year, 100)

The awards and industrial agreements actually in force on the 31st March, 1943, total 533 (last year, 524).

The Court also issued 4 apprenticeship orders and 61 miscellaneous documents (interpretations, enforcements, &c.).

Section 115 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1925, provides that every person who prints or publishes anything calculated to obstruct or in any way interfere with or prejudicially affect any matter before a Council of Conciliation or the Court of Arbitration is liable to a fine not exceeding £50. A Court action during the year (*Cornwell v. Temple* (42 Book of Awards 630)) under this section dealt with comment that appeared in a newspaper on 4th March, 1942. In this issue a report appeared concerning an application by the New Zealand Engine-drivers, River Engineers, Marine-engine Drivers, Greasers, Firemen, and Assistants' Industrial Association of Workers under the Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940. Other comment in the newspaper was deemed by the Court as calculated to prejudicially affect the application, and a fine of £2 was imposed.

WORK PERFORMED BY COMMISSIONERS AND COUNCILS OF CONCILIATION

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| Industrial agreements made under the Act | 19 (last year, 34) |
| Disputes where recommendations were substantially accepted or agreements reached and referred to the Court to make awards | 41 (last year, 84) |
| Disputes where partial settlement was arrived at and referred to the Court to make awards | 42 (last year, 35) |
| Disputes withdrawn | 6 |

MINIMUM WAGE-RATES FIXED BY AWARDS AND AGREEMENTS IN A NUMBER OF THE PRINCIPAL INDUSTRIES

A pronouncement of the Court of Arbitration (see 1937 Book of Awards 1648) contained standard minima for casual labour as follows: Skilled, 2s. 9d. per hour; semi-skilled, 2s. 5d. to 2s. 7½d. per hour; unskilled, 2s. 4d. per hour. These rates have, with variation, been written into awards issued subsequently.

The Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940 (Serial number 1940/86) empowered the Court of Arbitration to amend, by general order, the provisions of all awards, industrial agreements, and apprenticeship orders relating to the rate of remuneration of workers, and pursuant to this an increase of 5 per cent. upon rates fixed by awards, agreements or apprenticeship orders was granted on 12th August, 1940 (1940 Book of Awards 1153). Under the Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940, Amendment No. 3 (Serial number 1942/28), the Court was authorized to exclude from the scope of any subsequent order such portion of the remuneration in each week as exceeded an amount determined by it. It also prescribed that where any such exclusion was made any increase or reduction provided for by the order in the rates of remuneration applied to the unexcluded portion of the remuneration of each worker irrespective of his or her total weekly remuneration. By order dated 31st March, 1942, the Court increased rates of remuneration by 5 per cent., excluded such portion of the remuneration as exceeded £5 per week in the case of adult male workers, £2 10s. in the case of adult female workers, and £1 10s. in the case of junior workers and apprentices, and applied the increase to the unexcluded portion of the remuneration of each worker.

In making a general order under the Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations the Court was required to take into account (a) the economic and financial conditions affecting trade and industry in New Zealand, (b) the cost of living, (c) any rise or fall in the cost of living since the date when any previous order under the regulations was made, and (d) all other considerations which the Court deemed relevant. The Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations 1942 (Serial number 1942/335) introduced a new arrangement in respect of the variation of wage-rates on a general basis (popularly referred to as "cost-of-living increases"). Previously the Court of Arbitration was authorized to act only following an application of an industrial union or association of employers or workers. Now the Court is required to issue an order automatically if there is a variation of 5 per cent. (2½ per cent. increase for first order) in the general level of prices included in the wartime price index published by the Government Statistician.

The wartime price index is to be of the prices of such commodities and services, including rents, as the Minister of Industries and Commerce directs, the basic level of prices to be that indicated by the index as at 15th December, 1942. A statement is to be published by the Government Statistician as soon as possible after 15th March, 1943, and thereafter at quarterly intervals, showing the increase or reduction in the general level of prices as indicated by the wartime index. Whenever there is an increase or reduction of not less than 5 per cent. the Court of Arbitration is to issue a general order increasing or reducing rates of remuneration, but the first order following the introduction of the regulations shall be made when there is an increase of not less than 2½ per cent. The amount of the increase or reduction shall be as nearly as may be equivalent to the amount of the increase or reduction in the general level of prices. Further, there shall be excluded from the scope of the order such portion of the remuneration in each week of each worker affected by the order as exceeds £6, but this amount may be reduced in the case of female workers, junior workers, and apprentices. The increase or reduction applies to the unexcluded portion of the remuneration of each worker, irrespective of his total earnings. If the actual rate of remuneration exceeds the minimum rate prescribed by award or as the case may be, the increase or reduction nevertheless applies.

In the following table where there is no Dominion award or agreement in operation Wellington rates have been taken. All the wage-rates shown below, except those indicated by an asterisk (*), are subject to an increase of 5 per cent. as from 12th August, 1940, in accordance with the general order of the Court of Arbitration dated 9th August, 1940, and all are subject to the increase from 7th April, 1942, in accordance with the general order of the Court dated 31st March, 1942.