

lies on those who would bind certain employers and leave others free to pay what wages, &c., they choose. Certainly under the latter reading some startling abuses are occurring. In a North Island industrial district, while every little carpenter's shop in one town is under the award, two large timber-working establishments in another town are "free lances," thus making most invidious commercial distinctions and promoting unfair competition. The evil may arise through shortness of time or funds preventing a union's secretary ascertaining all the industrial establishments in his trade in a district. This is the probable cause, but there is room in the future for corruption by the omission of certain names from citation. It would be unwise to leave the interpretation in its present state, and it needs legislative pronouncement. If some more extensive advertisement should be made by direction of Parliament as to the lists of cases to be heard by the Court, there could be no reason for citing every person, as in the case of an industrial agreement. It is the business of an employer to acquaint himself with matters relating to his trade, the wages awarded, &c., and ignorance should be no defence any more than in regard to Factory Acts or common law. This matter of wider advertisement applies to both sides equally. At present a union of seven workers can bring forward a case before the Court, and have conditions fixed without the knowledge of hundreds of men of the same business working at a distance from towns, and these latter might (like their employers) have something to say on the subject.

No better illustration of the value of legislation compulsorily regulating industry could be brought forward than that of the Outtrim (Victoria) strike, which has just been declared "off." For sixteen months the coal-miners at Outtrim (who had asked for an increase of pay) have had to endure the privations, the irritation, and ruin of a lost living. Their places have been filled by others, and the miners have had to wander away to other places in search of employment. They have lost £176,000 in wages; they have spent £100,000 subscribed by friendly unionists from their own hard earnings; and the owners have lost fully £200,000 in profits. So that in this one instance alone the Colony of Victoria has thrown away at least half a million of money, which would have been saved by an Industrial Arbitration Act.

The Inspectors of Awards have had their hands full in some districts. One Inspector recovered over £300 of back wages for workers, in addition to fines and costs of witnesses. The result of appointing Inspectors fully justifies such appointment, as the operatives have been greatly benefited and protected, not only by the cases actually taken to the Court, but by the existence of officers whose duty is to see that the law is not evaded or abrogated. The amending Act of last year has been of great service in allowing the examination of the wages-books, &c., as, formerly, even when it was known by documentary evidence to an Inspector of Factories that the awarded wages were not being paid, he was powerless to use that knowledge for the purpose of the Arbitration Act, while now as an Inspector of Awards he can do so.

New Zealand received an official visitor from the United States Department of Labour in the person of Mr. Victor S. Clark, Ph.D. A very exhaustive and able report on our Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act was presented by Dr. Clark as the result of his inquiries here, and was printed at full length in the Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labour, November, 1903. He speaks in complimentary terms of the working of the Act in this colony, but considers that the people of the United States are under such different economic and social conditions that "compulsory arbitration" would be unfitted for adoption there at present.

The expenses incurred under the Act are as follows: * 1901-2—Conciliation Boards £2,611, Arbitration Court £2,034; 1902-3—Conciliation Boards £404, Arbitration Court £2,289; 1903-4—Conciliation Boards £461, Arbitration Court £2,428.

The following figures are for 1903-4 :—

Industrial agreements	...	...	...	...	...	19
Recommendations of Conciliation Boards	...	...	...	...	...	13
Interpretations by Board	...	...	...	...	...	2
Awards of Arbitration Court	...	...	...	...	...	25
Enforcements by Arbitration Court of awards and agreements	...	...	...	...	...	123
Interpretations, &c., by Court of Arbitration	...	...	...	...	...	21
Judgments under Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act	...	...	...	...	...	20
Total number of cases brought before Conciliation Boards	...	...	...	...	...	15
" " " Arbitration Court	...	...	...	...	...	169
" " " under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act	...	...	...	...	...	20

* The details of cases may be found in tabular form in this report, and the texts of awards, &c., in the volumes of awards issued annually by the Department of Labour.