

seems to be the defining of "What trade does a shopkeeper carry on who has a general stock, as in the case of a shopkeeper who sells fruit, groceries, fancy goods, cigarettes, and tobacco?" In order to set the matter at rest several cases were brought before the Magistrate's Court. The Magistrate held that a general shop- or general store-keeper belonged to that trade in which the major portion of his business was directed and carried on, and although a fruiterer or grocer sold tobacco, cigarettes, and cigars as a side-line he was not a tobacconist. This difficulty has also arisen in the case of the watch-makers and jewellers' requisition. The only effective remedy I can think of is that all persons who sell tobacco should be licensed. This should also apply to plate-sellers in the jewellery trade; for in this way the members of the different trades would be easily ascertained, and section 21 would be greatly assisted so far as requisitions are concerned.

During the year a considerable amount of overtime was worked in shops.

Attention has been given to see that overtime was paid for as provided by the Act.

There have been 24 convictions for breaches of the Act.

SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

This Act has worked smoothly. However, a complaint was made that some of the registry-office keepers, having first obtained the fee, were in the habit of sending servants to places where they were not required. A case was brought before the Court, and the registry-office keeper fined £2, and costs 7s., his license also being indorsed.

I am still of the opinion that the fee charged servants for obtaining a situation is more than should be charged, seeing that fully 75 per cent. of the employers are not charged at all by the registry-office keepers. I maintain that if any fee is charged the servant it should only be half the amount chargeable to the employer. By so reducing the fee it would have no bad effect on the well-conducted offices, and, again, the employer is better able to pay than the servant, who, in most cases, has not the money to pay, and is compelled to give an order on his or her employer for payment of same.

The number of registry offices now in existence is fourteen, a decrease of five on the previous year. This decrease is said to be due to the effect of the different unions who have "preference" under awards, which makes it easier and cheaper for both employer and employee, there being no fee payable by either party for obtaining employment; and employers have only to look up the employment-book to see what workers there are available.

In conclusion I have to thank the officers of the Health Department for the assistance I have received in all matters pertaining to sanitation; also all those with whom my duties have brought me in contact. I have had nothing but the greatest assistance and forbearance shown me, which helps so much to cheer one in doing a duty which is sometimes unpleasant and arduous.

I have, &c.,

J. B. LINDSAY,

Inspector of Factories.

The Chief Inspector of Factories, Wellington.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 20th April, 1907.

I have the honour to report on the breaches of awards and agreements in force in Wellington under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, for the year ending the 31st March, 1907, as follows:—

During the year 360 complaints were investigated, out of which 221 cases were taken before the Court, resulting in 205 convictions, and penalties amounting to £527 10s. being inflicted; 9 cases were withdrawn, and the remaining 5 were dismissed. Seventy-three cases are now filed and waiting to be dealt with by the Court. The remainder were found not to be breaches, or were settled without reference to the Court.

The number of breaches of awards, &c., is greatly on the increase, and the whole of my time has been devoted to dealing with these cases. Very few cases where breaches were found to have been committed were settled out of Court—only those where it was found that the breaches were of a trivial nature and inadvertently committed. The taking of these cases before the Court, and the inflicting of a more substantial penalty, will no doubt have a very salutary effect on employers, who have heretofore disregarded the terms of the various awards and agreements under which they are working, and it is to be hoped that the number of breaches for the ensuing year will be greatly reduced.

Under the cooks and waiters' agreement, which came into operation on the 29th November last, we have investigated during the four months of its existence some 76 complaints, of which 67 cases for breach of the agreement have been filed to be dealt with by the Court. Therefore the parties working under this agreement are responsible to a great extent for the increase in the number of breaches committed. This agreement is the most difficult of all to enforce. The conditions are so very materially different from those of the old award that employers find it in many cases difficult to comply with the altered conditions, and if it were enforced in its entirety business people would be greatly hampered in the conduct of their business. The agreement wants amending in many respects, but especially in respect to oyster-saloons and similar places. Until such alterations are made difficulty will be experienced in carrying out its provisions.

I have found that in the majority of cases of breach of award the breach has not been wilfully committed. Employers will not take the trouble to acquaint themselves with the conditions of the award under which they are working, and consequently they commit breaches thereof, and are unaware that they are doing so. Nine-tenths of the breaches investigated by me have been committed in this way. I am afraid there is no other remedy but to take such employers before the Arbitration Court, and the imposing of a substantial penalty, no doubt, will cause them to acquaint themselves with and