

imprisonment if fines when inflicted were disregarded. Others considered such drastic measures as incompatible with individual freedom, especially where the matter in dispute was the subject of difference of opinion on economic questions, or where the penalty inflicted fell with equal force on married men with families and on unmarried offenders. There was also haziness as to the occupations of those who should or should not be considered as industrial workers. The question of granting permits to work below the minimum wage, the desirability of restoring power to Conciliation Boards, of terminating awards in districts where strikes against these awards took place, of giving the Court power to refuse to make an award—all these and many other open questions required consideration, and necessitated very considerable changes in the Act to bring it into line with modern opinion. The Parliament by passing the Amending Act of 1908 decided most of these debatable points, and made manifest the intention of the Legislature that, while doubtful definitions should be removed or cleared, the original principle of the Act which made conciliation a primary consideration should be reverted to and established. On the 28th January, 1909, three Commissioners of Conciliation were appointed—viz., Mr. T. Harle Giles, for the Northern and Taranaki Industrial Districts; Mr. P. Hally, for Wellington, Marlborough, Nelson, and Westland Districts; Mr. J. R. Triggs, for Canterbury, and Otago and Southland Districts. These Commissioners have already done good service, as their appended reports will show. It is early to pass an opinion on the new principle they are working under, but it certainly appears that there is already a better spirit becoming apparent on the parts both of employer and employed. There is a greater readiness to give and take, and less disposition to press the letter of an award or agreement to excess. Altogether the outlook for industrial arbitration is reassuring and full of encouragement.

The year generally has been free from any serious dispute terminating in strike or lockout, the bakers' strike in Wellington being the only trouble of the kind demanding attention. Mr. Lomas, Chief Inspector of Factories, is dealing with the details of this matter in his report for the year.

The expenses of the Boards of Conciliation during 1908–9 were as follows:—

Expenses of Boards of Conciliation for Year ending 31st March, 1909.

District.	Amount paid in Fees to Members.	Amount paid to Members for Travelling-expenses.	Amount paid to Members for Postage and Telegrams.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Northern	176 8 0	.. ..	.. ..
Taranaki .. .. .	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Wellington	543 9 0	88 9 4	0 18 3
Nelson .. .. .	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Westland	6 12 0	0 3 2	.. ..
Marlborough .. .. .	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Canterbury	454 4 0	50 11 11	0 6 9
Otago and Southland	42 0 0	.. ..	.. ..
Auckland—special Board <i>re</i> tramways dispute ..	106 10 0	2 19 10	.. ..
Totals	1,329 3 0	142 4 3	1 5 0
	142 4 3		
	1 5 0		
Grand total	1,472 12 3		

The travelling and other expenses of the Court of Arbitration [exclusive of the salaries (£2,800), which are voted under special Act] amounted to £2,536 16s. 7d.

	£ s. d.
Court of Arbitration	2,536 16 7
Boards of Conciliation	1,472 12 3
Total	£4,009 8 10

The following cases taken under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act are of more than usual interest:—

The dispute between the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Labourers' Union and the Canterbury Sheepowners' Union involved about seven thousand farmers as employers. It was a long, tedious, and expensive dispute, which was settled to the dissatisfaction of the workers, a dissatisfaction resulting in the loss of over a thousand members to the union. The dispute was presented to the Conciliation Board for settlement on the 16th November, 1906, and on the same day was referred by the union to the Arbitration Court. The case came before the Court in August, 1907, and was by order of the Court