

In another case, in which a runholder in the Oxford district was charged with failing to provide proper accommodation for his hands, the Magistrate ordered the notice to be complied with to the satisfaction of the local Inspector.

The case at Wanganui referred to above, which was dismissed by the Stipendiary Magistrate, brings up the question of the desirability of having the Act amended, as it is at present too cumbersome. As the Act stands, notice must be given by the Department before the 1st of June for accommodation to be provided. If this notice is not complied with when shearing commences, in (say) October or November, the Department cannot then take proceedings for a penalty for failing to comply, but must, instead, apply to a Magistrate for an order requiring such accommodation to be provided. The Magistrate then, if he thinks fit, orders the accommodation by a certain date, but by the time this date expires the shearing season is over, and it is useless taking further action until next season, when, if the accommodation is not then provided, a penalty can be sued for. This is assuming that the conditions applying to the station when the Inspector first visited it—viz., as to number of hands employed, &c.—still exist. Moreover, in some cases it is found that by this time the ownership is changed, when it is necessary to commence afresh. It will therefore be seen that there is too much delay in dealing with these matters. The Department is always prepared to allow a reasonable time to comply with its notice, and makes every allowance for any difficulty that arises in getting material on the ground, &c., and in many cases has already met proprietors in this way.

“ THE INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT, 1908.”

On the 31st December last there were 122 unions of employers registered, with 3,918 members, as against 113, with a membership of 3,276, for the year 1905. The number of workers' unions registered in 1905 was 261, with 29,869 members, as against 325, with a membership of 49,347, for the 1908 period. The increase in employers' unions is very steady, but it will be seen that the membership of workers' unions has practically doubled during the last four years. Comparing this year's figures with those of last year, it appears that there has been an increase of 288 in the membership of employers' unions and 3,733 in the membership of workers' unions. During the year ending 31st March last 35 workers' unions, with 1,818 members, and 10 employers' unions, with 160 members, were registered, whilst 2 workers' unions and 1 employers' union cancelled registration; and 2 associations of workers were also registered during the period. Twenty-eight unions had the whole of their rules revised and registered as complete amendments, and 41 unions had partial amendments to their rules revised and accepted. During the present year 16 employers' unions and a like number of workers' unions have been cancelled for failure to send in annual returns under section 21. Full particulars of the unions dealt with in this way are included in the report laid on the table of the House in regard to membership of industrial unions.

For the four years 1906–9 awards have been made by the Arbitration Court under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act as follows:—

Year.	Number.	Year.	Number.
1906	52	1908	98
1907	59	1909	88

a total of 297 for the period.

A very heavy duty was imposed on the Department by the provisions of section 63 of the Amendment Act, by which all awards and industrial agreements relating to factories or shops are required to be posted up in a conspicuous place, so that they might be easily read by persons employed therein. Many of the awards were out of print, and consequently had to be reprinted for the purposes of complying with this clause. A very large number were thus dealt with, and it is estimated that 50,000 copies of awards were issued to various factory and shop occupiers throughout the Dominion. In this connection the Department has specially to thank the Government Printer and his staff for the expedition shown in dealing with these reprints. The whole of the work was completed in a remarkably short space of time, and was most satisfactorily done. As a result of such a wide distribution of awards, it is confidently expected that there will be no excuse for either employers or employees to plead ignorance of the terms and conditions of awards. If the awards are posted up as the section requires, there should be no reason why any excuse of ignorance should be accepted. Occupiers of shops and factories who are parties to these awards are liable to a fine of £5 for failure to comply with the provisions of this clause, but up to the present no action has been taken under the section.

The cases taken by the Department for enforcement of awards in the Arbitration Court numbered 552, as against 754 last year; but a further 113 cases were taken by our Inspectors in the Magistrate's Court, in accordance with the Amendment Act passed last session. The total number of cases taken