

Eighty-three cases were taken before the Courts during the year for breaches of awards and agreements—viz., 49 against employers and 34 against workers. Of these, judgment was obtained in 76 cases, and 7 were dismissed. Of the 76 cases referred to, two of them were referred to the Arbitration Court during the previous year for interpretation, judgment being given during the present period in favour of the Department. The total penalties for breaches of awards or agreements amounted to £76 5s., with the usual costs. It was found necessary to prosecute four employers for failing to comply with section 58 of the Amendment Act of 1908 in regard to keeping wages and overtime books. Judgment was given in every instance in favour of the Department, the penalties imposed amounting to £5 and costs. The following is a tabulated statement showing the number of cases of enforcements taken before the Court, with particulars of the offences:—

Against employers—

Employing boys under eighteen years of age to drive	...	...	4
Employing boys at less than the minimum wage	...	...	3
Failing to pay overtime rates	...	...	5
Failing to pay the minimum wage	...	...	12
Employing youth without first employing fully paid man	...	...	2
Employing more than the proportion of boys to men allowed by award	...	...	3
Employing apprentices at less than minimum wage	...	...	2
Failing to indenture apprentices	...	...	4
Failing to pay wages in full weekly	...	...	1
Failing to provide proper sanitary conveniences	...	...	1
Failing to engage labour at proper place	...	...	2
Boarding an employee without consent of union	...	...	4
Failing to pay overtime rates to pieceworkers	...	...	4
Failing to notify Inspector of the discharge of an apprentice	...	...	1
Employing more than proportion of apprentices to journeymen allowed	...	...	1
Total	...	...	49

Against workers—

Accepting less than the minimum wage	...	...	6
Failing to enter in time-book daily hours worked	...	...	17
Leaving employment without giving week's notice	...	...	2
Boarding with employer without consent of union	...	...	3
Leaving employment without permission of employer	...	...	6
Total	...	...	34

*Permits to Under-rate Workers.*—The amendment of the Act of 1908, giving Inspectors the duty of issuing permits to under-rate workers, has worked well, and the falling-off in the number of applicants indicates clearly that there are fewer incompetents than formerly. Most of the permits issued were in cases of old age, and a few in cases where youths had completed their apprenticeships, and who realized they were unable to take their place as fully competent journeymen, and expressed a desire to work for a short period as improvers. In a number of these cases two permits were issued to the same person during the year. Permits were issued in the following trades: Carpenters, 1; rattan and wicker workers, 2; painters, 2; brick and tile workers, 1; Plumbers, 2; boot trade, 12; typographical, 1; bricklayers, 2; cycle trade, 1; aerated-water workers, 2; grocers, 2; engineers, 1; and coachworkers, 1. This number does not include permits issued by unions.

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

The provisions of this Act have been well observed generally, especially in regard to the closing-day and the half-holiday for assistants, and although the number of breaches of the law have increased considerably this year, in many instances the breaches were the result of carelessness or forgetfulness on the part of the occupiers in failing to close at the proper time, and not on account of the occupier's deliberate intention of gaining an advantage over other shopkeepers in the various trades.

The early-closing movement has made considerable advancement in this district, as at the present time nearly all of the principal businesses close under requisitions got up by the shopkeepers themselves in accordance with section 25 of the Act. The following trades are now closing under requisitions in this city and district: In the City of Christchurch—Boot and shoe shops, chemists, cycle and motor shops, jewellers, grocers, butchers, hairdressers and tobacconists; in Riccarton, Spreydon, Heathcote, and Woolston districts—Grocers; in New Brighton and Sumner districts—Grocers and storekeepers.

Careful inquiries were made by Inspectors in regard to the wages paid to the employees; also as to the sanitary conveniences provided in businesses where both sexes were employed.

The provision in the Amendment Act of last session making it compulsory for time and wages books to be kept has helped Inspectors to ascertain, with little difficulty, the hours worked and wages paid to the various employees. In a few instances it was found that the workers had not had their increases at the proper time, or deductions had been made for holidays.

The Amendment Act of last session considerably extended the scope of the Act, mainly as regards hotels, &c., and entailed a considerable amount of additional work; and although the award governing the hotels in the City of Christchurch provided for wages, hours, &c., this condition did not obtain in the outlying districts. The hotelkeepers, so far, have shown a readiness