

Accidents.—During the year there were 145 accidents reported by factory occupiers; the large majority were slight, and resulted in very little lost time by the injured workers. Only 16 cases may be described as serious. One worker met with injuries causing death; the worker was engaged in attempting to put on a belt to a fixed pulley on the shaft, which was revolving at a high speed, when his shirt-sleeve caught between the pulley and the belting and dragged him round the shafting. I would suggest that some provision be made forbidding such dangerous operations, as nearly all the fatal accidents that have happened during the past few years in connection with machinery in this district have been caused in the same manner.

Fire-escapes.—Due precaution has been taken to see that proper means of egress have been provided where necessary, and a number of fire-escapes have been erected during the year at the request of the Department.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The work entailed in administering the above Act with the various awards and agreements in force has shown no diminution, for, although employers are more conversant with the awards or agreements governing their respective trade, there are a number of minor breaches committed, especially in the matter of keeping a proper wages and overtime book as provided for in section 58 of the amendment of 1908. The number of alleged breaches reported by secretaries of unions and others has been well up to former years, perhaps on account of extra vigilance of secretaries, or on account of the workers themselves having a better knowledge of the Act or of the awards under which they work. Of course, as formerly, many of these reports are trivial, and not of sufficient importance to warrant a prosecution, and many, unwittingly, have no foundation for complaint. When there have been reasonable grounds for believing that an error has been made, we have agreed to the payment of arrears of wages due to the workers instead of taking proceedings, and the following amounts were thus collected and paid over to the workers in the various trades during the year under review: Aerated-water workers, £5 8s. 6d.; boot trade, £8 1s. 1d.; carpenters, £29 17s. 4d.; coach-workers, £2 5s.; cycle-workers, £17 5s.; dairymen, £1 16s. 3d.; drivers, £3 16s. 10d.; engineers, £130; freezers, &c., £9 9s. 6d.; furniture trades, 2s. 6d.; hosiery-workers, 7s. 4d.; hotel-workers, £22 3s. 6d.; labourers, £88 1s.; lithograph and letterpress machinists, 6s. 7d.; metal-workers, £33 17s. 11d.; painters, £38 19s. 11d.; pastrycooks, 13s. 6d.; plumbers, 3s. 1d.; plasterers, £3 11s. 6d.; shearers (shed hands), £18 11s. 7d.; tailoring trade, £48 11s.; tailoresses and pressers, £12 2s. 3d.; threshing-mill hands, £1 6s. 6d.; woollen-mill hands, 18s. 3d.: total, £477 15s. 11d.

Breaches of Awards or Agreements.—Seventy-seven cases of breaches of awards or agreements were taken before the Court—viz., 66 against employers, and 11 against workers. Of these, favourable judgments were received in 73 cases, and 4 cases were dismissed on account of contradictory or insufficient evidence. One case of appeal left over from the previous year was decided in favour of the Department.

The total amount of penalties for breaches of awards or agreements was £62 8s.

Permits to Under-rate Workers.—The number of applications for under-rate workers' permits shows a considerable falling-off, and indicates that either there are a smaller number of "incompetents" in the various trades, or that tradesmen have been scarce, and full wages have been paid to those who formerly worked under permit. This Department has made a practice of increasing the rate to be paid on the issue of each successive permit to the same worker, so that in a very short time he is receiving the full wage. Most of the permits issued this year have been to old men who will get worse rather than better. The following permits have been issued in the respective trades: Rattan and wicker workers, 1; Bricklayers, 2; boot trade, 7: total, 10.

Breaches of the Amendment Act of 1908.—Proceedings were taken against employers in 9 cases for failing to keep a wages and overtime book as required by section 58; conviction was obtained in all cases, and penalties amounting to £8 5s. and costs were imposed.

The following is a tabulated statement showing the number of cases for breaches of awards or agreements taken before the Court, with the particulars of the offences:—

Against employers—

Failing to pay female workers for public holidays ...	...	...	4
Failing to pay minimum wage ...	...	...	15
Failing to give preference to unionists ...	...	...	3
Failing to pay a motorman full week's wages ...	...	...	1
Employing youths not of age to drive ...	...	...	3
Failing to pay overtime rates ...	...	...	1
Failing to pay overtime rates for award holidays ...	...	...	1
Failing to pay overtime rates for Saturday afternoon ...	...	...	2
Employing a youth on evening shift ...	...	...	1
Employing workers later than 6 p.m. ...	...	...	4
Failing to pay travelling time for suburban work ...	...	...	24
Failing to indenture apprentices ...	...	...	4
Discharging shearers for refusing to shear wet sheep ...	...	...	1
Failing to exhibit time-sheets ...	...	...	2
Total ...	...	...	66

Against workers—

Failing to give week's notice of intention to leave ...	...	...	4
Working for less than minimum wage ...	...	...	2
Working at ordinary rates for Saturday afternoon ...	...	...	2
Working later than 6 p.m. ...	...	...	3
Total ...	...	...	11