

Permits for overtime were granted for special work, such as stocktaking, &c. 1,355 assistants worked 19,780 hours—viz., 744 males worked 12,296 hours, and 611 females worked 7,511 hours.

SHEARERS' AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

A fair number of farms and sheep-stations were visited during the past year, and in a few cases employers were called upon to make improvements. In most cases the requisitions were cheerfully complied with, and in a few cases only have the employers resented the demands made. The worst cases of accommodation discovered were generally in connection with threshing-mills, which travel from place to place, sometimes late in the evening, and where it was sometimes necessary to pitch camp on damp, muddy ground, &c. Inspections were made in the following districts: Amberley, Waipara, Waikari, Hawarden, Culverden, Hanmer, Pigeon Bay, Methven, and Chertsey. I understand a complete set of regulations under the Act will be issued shortly, which will clearly specify the accommodation to be provided on farms and stations for the convenience of the workers employed.

MEN'S EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

In this branch the year just past has been a particularly busy one, and work has been secured for almost all callers. There was practically no unemployment difficulty during the winter, as plenty of work offered at the time on the various public works at Mina, Cass, and Otira. Farm-work has also been fairly plentiful, and employers' needs have been readily attended to. The chief trouble in dealing with this work has been the difficulty in finding suitable employment for workers, who, by reason of sickness or general incapacity, have been unable to undertake the heavier forms of labour offering. Some men also objected to leaving the town, and it was these and the previously mentioned class who were hardest to deal with. The records for the year show that 1,079 men—226 married and 853 single, with a total of 700 dependants—have been placed in employment, of which number 592 were engaged on various Government works and 487 by private individuals.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

During the past year there has been the usual large number of new awards and industrial agreements made, necessitating vigilance on the part of the Inspectors. The number of complaints made by secretaries of unions and others shows no diminution, and, as is usual in these cases, a large number on investigation were found to be either trivial offences or breaches committed by the employer in ignorance. When making the usual inspection of factories or shops Inspectors have discovered a number of breaches of awards, and those wilfully committed have caused the offenders to be brought before the Court. When errors have been made by employers or their servants, or where an award has been misread, the Department has allowed the employers to correct matters by the payment of the arrears due to the various workers. Where doubt has existed as to the meaning of a clause of an award or agreement, appeal has been made to the Arbitration Court in the form of an application for interpretation.

The following amounts (arrears of wages, &c.), totalling £141 10s. 8d., have been collected from employers, and paid over to the workers concerned in the following trades: Boot trade, £7 6s. 2d.; coach-workers, £24 19s. 10d.; dairymen, £11 16s. 8d.; drivers, £7 11s. 11d.; labourers, £14 8s.; metal-workers' assistants, £6 16s. 6d.; moulders (iron and brass), £21 16s. 4d.; tailoring trade (order), £5 16s. 8d.; tailoresses and pressers (factory), £13 1s. 2d.; also sundry amounts in nine miscellaneous trades.

The cases for breaches of awards and industrial agreements taken before the Court number 47 against employers and 10 against workers; 48 cases were decided in favour of the Department; 6 were dismissed; 1 was referred to the Arbitration Court by the Magistrate; and in 2 cases judgment was reserved. Several of the cases dismissed were taken to get an interpretation of the award, and no costs were given against the Department. The total amount of penalties for breaches of awards was £51 15s. The number of prosecutions for breaches of the various awards and Acts shows a falling-off, and indicates that employers are becoming more familiar with the Acts or awards under which they are bound.

The following is a return showing the number of cases taken before the Court with the particulars of offences:—

Against employers—

Failing to pay minimum wage to journeymen	...	...	...	24
Failing to pay overtime rate	...	...	...	1
Charging employees a higher rate for board than provided by award	...	...	...	4
Employing an assistant later than the prescribed time	...	...	...	3
Discharging a shearer because he refused to shear wet sheep	...	...	...	1
Failing to notify the secretary of the union of the engagement of a non-unionist	...	...	...	3
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	11
Total	...	...	...	47

Against employees—

Leaving employment without giving employer a week's notice	...	...	...	3
Working for less than the minimum wage	...	...	...	7
Total	...	...	...	10