

*Decisions of Interest during the Year.*

*Union and Society in same Industry.*—An industrial union of clerks and office employees, registered under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, sought to obtain an award fixing conditions of employment with certain warehousemen. This application was opposed by the employers and by the Wholesale Warehouse Clerks Society, which was not registered under this Act. It was proved that the latter society had a membership of over 90 per cent. of the workers concerned; that no request had been made to it for a meeting to consider wages or conditions; and that no complaints had been made. It was held by the Court that under the circumstances no *bona fide* dispute existed between the registered union and the employers.

*Preference and Annual Subscription.*—In a memorandum to the Northern Industrial District Rope and Twine Workers' award the Court stated that the union desired to be granted the usual preference clause with the condition that the maximum subscription of members should be an annual one (£1 10s.) in place of the usual weekly contribution (6d. or 9d.). It was explained by the union advocate that this annual subscription would admit workers to membership not only in the applicant union but also in any of the unions comprised in a certain association of unions. The Court thought, however, that as the association in question comprised a limited number of unions, and the members of the union then before the Court would in many cases seek employment in industries where the unions were not included in the association, the payment of so large a subscription as £1 10s. would be a hardship to a worker who left his employment after a few weeks or months and entered another employment which necessitated his paying an entrance fee and subscriptions to another union. The employers' advocate did not object seriously to the proposed clause, but the Court thought it better for the protection of the workers to adhere to the usual preference clause.

*Preference and Levies.*—An action was brought by the Auckland Waterside Foremen and Timekeepers' Industrial Union of Workers against a company for a breach of the preference clause of their award. The award granted preference to the union on the condition that its rules provided for an entrance fee not exceeding 5s. and contributions not exceeding 6d. a week. The rules provided accordingly for a contribution of 6d. a week, but in addition provision was made enabling the union to strike levies not exceeding £2 a member per annum. It was held by the Magistrate that levies must be included in the term "contributions," and that the union was therefore not entitled to preference. This decision was subsequently upheld on appeal to the Court of Arbitration.

*Cost-of-living Bonus.*—In May, 1921, in considering what cost-of-living bonus (if any) should be given for the period commencing 1st May, 1921, the Court found that the sum of 3s. a week was required to meet the increase that had taken place in the cost of living during the half-year ending 31st March, 1921. To this had to be added 2s. withheld from the previous bonus, as mentioned in paragraph 4 of last annual report. After the fullest consideration, however, the Court was satisfied that under the conditions of trade then existing it was no longer possible for employers to pay increased wages, and that any increase would lead to marked unemployment. In view of the fact that the market had already commenced to fall, it was therefore decided to set off the 5s. then due against the anticipated reduction that would be shown by the half-yearly figures in September, thus stabilizing wages for a period of twelve months until the 30th April, 1922. Proof of extraordinary circumstances would be required to induce the Court to depart from this principle in any particular case.

*Industrial Disturbances.*

There were eighty-three industrial disturbances during the year; of these twenty-three were merely stop-work meetings, while an additional forty-nine may be classed as unimportant or trivial. The following is a brief summary of the more important disturbances. It will be seen that in only a few cases were the strikes due to claims by the workers for increased wages.

(1.) *Coal-miners, Millerton.*—Owing to a qualified miner not going to work as usual at the Millerton Mines his partner was unable to commence work, and the Millerton Miners' Union held that under the circumstances work should be found for the partner in another portion of the mine. The company did not agree, and a four-days stoppage of work took place. Finally a compromise acceptable to both parties was arrived at. The workers, 390 in number, were bound by an industrial agreement under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

(2.) *Timber-workers, Kumara.*—Thirty-four workers, bound by an award under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, employed by the K. K. Sawmilling Co., Ltd., Kumara, discontinued their employment to compel the employer to grant a special contract price for hill-country bush. A new contract party took over the contract at the old price after a delay of three days.

(3.) *Loco-drivers, Stockton Coal Company.*—Arising out of a claim for payment on wet days, thirteen loco-drivers employed by the Stockton Coal Company discontinued their employment. The company granted an increase of 2s. a day, and work was commenced after a stoppage of four days. The parties were working under the Miners' national agreement, which in practice had superseded a previous award under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

(4.) *Slaughtermen and Abattoir Assistants, Westfield, Auckland.*—Seventeen workers employed by the Auckland City Council at the abattoirs, Westfield, discontinued their employment for approximately two months on account of their objection to sawing through the rumps of beasts in lieu of chopping through. The matter in dispute was referred to the Conciliation Commissioner at Auckland, who decided that the carcasses should be sawn. The workers were bound by an agreement under the Labour Disputes Investigation Act, 1913.

(5.) *Gas-workers, Petone.*—Owing to an alteration of working-hours made by the Petone Borough Council, sixteen men employed at the Borough Gasworks discontinued their employment. The men's places were filled by other workers. The parties were not bound by any award or agreement.