

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

Prosecutions numbered 315, and convictions were obtained in 300 cases. No case calls for special comment.

During the year 208 requisitions were served on occupiers of shops to comply with various requirements of the Act, such as cleansing, sanitary conveniences, heating-appliances, ventilation, drinking-water, and other safeguards for workers.

Visits of inspection to the number of 11,938 were made during the year.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

	1922-23.	1923-24.
Industrial agreements filed	19	18
Recommendations of Councils of Conciliation	146	118
Awards of the Court of Arbitration	131	91

The awards and industrial agreements actually in force on the 31st March, 1924, total 551 (last year 569). The continued reduction in the number of awards, agreements, &c., made during the year is probably accounted for partly in the same way as last year—viz., by the fact that there was little to expect yet in the way of increased wages. Under the new provision contained in the 1922 amendment, which enables industrial associations (of unions) to apply for awards covering two or more industrial districts (commonly called “Dominion” awards) five such awards have been made, taking the place of a larger number of district awards, and this has no doubt also contributed to a certain extent to the reduction in the number of awards in force and in the number of awards made during the year.

From its inception in 1913 to date only twenty-three unions have had disputes, numbering fifty, dealt with under the Labour Disputes Investigation Act, while there are 551 awards and agreements in force under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (for particulars of the former see page 7).

WORK PERFORMED BY COMMISSIONERS AND COUNCILS OF CONCILIATION DURING THE YEAR.

	Commissioner P. Hally.	Commissioner W. Newton.	Commissioner W. H. Hagger.	Total.
Industrial agreements arrived at and filed as such under section 26 by parties through the Commissioner alone	4	6	1	11
Disputes dealt with by Conciliation Councils—				
Where industrial agreements were filed under section 26	..	1	..	1
Where recommendations were fully accepted and forwarded to the Court to be made into awards	21	16	27	64
Where recommendations were substantially accepted or agreements reached and referred to Court to make awards	9	25	10	44
Where only minor recommendation or no recommendation was made	..	5	5	10
Totals	34	53	43	130

Out of the total of 130 disputes dealt with by the Commissioners and Conciliation Councils, 120 (equal to 92·3 per cent.) were thus settled or substantially settled by them without recourse to the Arbitration Court. The proportion so settled last year was 78·98.

The cost-of-living legislation expired on the 31st December, 1923, and the normal method of settling disputes has now been resumed.

REGISTRATIONS OF INDUSTRIAL UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS.

The usual statutory return (to the 31st December, 1923) of the unions registered under the Act, with their membership at that date, is published herewith as an appendix. Comparison with the previous year shows that there has been an increase of eight in the number of employers' unions, with an increase in the membership of 350. The total number of workers' unions has increased by four, and the total membership has decreased by 2,171.

The decrease in the total membership of workers' unions does not call for comment.

PROSECUTIONS.

Prosecutions for breaches of Act and of awards and industrial agreements numbered 590 (eighty-four dismissed). There were 359 prosecutions of employers and sixty-seven of workers for various breaches of awards and of the Act other than strikes and other cessations of employment, while 160 workers were prosecuted for striking or otherwise ceasing employment. Four unions were also prosecuted for instigating cessations of work—two for breaches of the Act, and two for breaches of award.