

Complaints were received regarding 486 alleged breaches of the Act, while 118 other breaches were discovered by the Department's Inspectors, 388 warnings being issued.

There were 41 prosecutions during the year for various breaches of the Act and the orders made thereunder, convictions being entered in 22 of the cases, and penalties amounting to £35 5s. being imposed. Of the prosecutions, 23 were against employers and 18 against apprentices.

The following table gives the approximate number of apprentices in the trades to which the Act applies. This information is based mainly on contracts of apprenticeship as registered with the Department.

RETURN SHOWING NUMBER OF APPRENTICES EMPLOYED IN SKILLED TRADES, APRIL, 1932.

(The figures for the previous year are shown in parentheses.)

Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.	Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.	Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.
Baking ..	281 (371)	Electrical ..	434 (630)	Plumbing ..	515 (679)
Boatbuilding ..	31 (41)	Engineering ..	794 (1,052)	Plastering ..	164 (198)
Boilermaking ..	58 (72)	Motor-engineering ..	887 (1,172)	Printing ..	643 (703)
Bootmaking ..	187 (216)	Furniture ..	534 (643)	Saddlery ..	34 (38)
Boot-repairing ..	30 (46)	Gardening ..	15 (19)	Sail, tent, &c. ..	1 (3)
Blacksmithing ..	29 (31)	Hairdressing ..	97 (162)	Tailoring ..	21 (27)
Bricklaying ..	64 (81)	Hatmaking ..	2 (2)	Tinsmithing ..	135 (150)
Carpentering ..	1,095 (1,426)	Jewellery ..	43 (54)	Wicker-working ..	19 (37)
Clothing ..	59 (64)	Leadlight ..	24 (29)		
Coachbuilding ..	272 (367)	Masonry ..	21 (35)	Totals ..	6,910 (8,901)
Coopering ..	4 (7)	Moulding ..	97 (95)		
Cycle-working ..	14 (44)	Painting ..	306 (407)		

The following table shows the number of apprentices employed in each year during the past five years :—

April,	Number of Apprentices.	April,	Number of Apprentices.
1928	10,227	1931	8,901
1929	9,943	1932	6,910
1930	9,826		

AMENDMENT OF ACT.

Owing to the great difficulty that was being experienced by employers in finding employment for their apprentices during the present economic crisis, provision was made in section 56 of the Finance Act, 1932, giving Magistrates power, on application by any party concerned, to amend, suspend, or cancel any contract of apprenticeship in force at the date of the passing of the Act. Before cancelling any contract, however, the Magistrate is required to be satisfied that, owing to the economic conditions affecting the industry concerned or the particular business of the employer, the employer cannot reasonably be expected to continue to carry out the terms of the contract, but in the event of his ordering cancellation of the contract he may, if he thinks fit, award compensation to the apprentice. Numbers of applications have already been made under this legislation, relief being granted in the great majority of cases by amending the contracts with a view to rationing the work available or by suspending the contracts for certain periods. In very few cases has cancellation of the contracts been ordered.

ARREARS OF WAGES.

Amounts totalling £4,695 18s. 6d. were collected by the Department's officers on behalf of workers who had been underpaid the wages prescribed by awards and the various Acts, while further amounts of such arrears, totalling £2,584 19s., were paid by employers, at the instance of the Inspectors, directly to the workers concerned: Total, £7,280 17s. 6d.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

The following cases have been heard and determined by the Court of Arbitration during the last six years: 1926, 60; 1927, 99; 1928, 99; 1929, 101; 1930, 123; 1931, 175.

A summary of the more important cases is contained in "New Zealand Workers' Compensation Cases," which is published annually by the Department.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT (ACCOMMODATION FOR FLAX-MILL AND SAWMILL WORKERS, ETC.).

A total of seven inspections were made under this Act at sawmills, flax-mills, &c., and five owners were required to carry out improvements to buildings, to provide new or to improve existing conveniences, and to provide first-aid outfits and bathing-facilities.