

REGISTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIONS.

The usual statutory return (to the 31st December, 1932) of the associations and unions registered under the Act, with their membership at that date, is published herewith as an appendix. Comparison with the previous year shows that the total number of workers' unions has decreased by 5 (to 400), and the total membership has decreased by 11,243 (from 90,526 to 79,283).

INSPECTIONS, ETC.

During the year 1,821 complaints of alleged breaches of the Act and of awards and industrial agreements, &c., were received, but it was found on investigation that in 608 cases no breach had been committed, in 105 cases proceedings were taken, and in 974 warnings were given. No action was considered necessary in the remaining cases. Apart from the complaints mentioned above, a large proportion of the inspections of factories, shops, &c., included an inspection to ascertain whether the awards and agreements were being complied with in respect of wages, overtime, &c., and, as a result of these inspections 23 prosecutions were taken and warnings were given in other cases. Of the 128 prosecutions, 118 were against employers and 10 against workers; 98 convictions were recorded, 89 against employers and 9 against workers. Total penalties, £102 2s.

INDUSTRIAL DISTURBANCES DURING THE YEAR.

There were in all thirty industrial disturbances during the year. The following is a summary of the larger disturbances :—

Tramway Employees (Christchurch).—The union would not agree with the Tramway Board upon an extension of the system, already in operation, of "rationing" the available work in lieu of dismissing surplus men, and the services of twelve men were therefore terminated. The other employees thereupon ceased work with a view to compelling the Board to reinstate the men who had been dismissed. After a period of two weeks, during which a partial tramway service was maintained, chiefly by "volunteer labour," the recommendations of an arbitrator agreed upon by the parties were adopted and work was resumed.

Coal-miners.—The miners in most of the coal-mines in the Dominion ceased work as a protest against the new conditions of employment offered by the mine-owners, the principal point of difference being the question as to whether the mine-managers should have an unrestricted right to engage and dismiss employees. The disturbance involved approximately 3,700 men for periods varying from one to twenty-six days. At a conference arranged by the Hon. the Minister of Labour a compromise was reached, and the men subsequently decided to resume work under the conditions agreed upon at that conference.

Coal-miners (Dennistown).—The miners refused to work under the new terms offered by the owners, and the mine was idle for a period of eighty days before terms satisfactory to both sides were arranged.

Coal-miners (Southland).—The owners in five mines in the Nightcaps district jointly proposed reductions in rates of pay, amounting to upwards of 20 per cent. Excepting in the case of one mine where the men effected a compromise with the owners, the mines were idle for one hundred and forty days before work was resumed upon terms which were substantially those which had originally been proposed by the employers.

Freezing Workers.—Following upon the cancellation, pursuant to section 7 (4) of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act, 1932, of the Freezing Workers' award, the workers in many of the freezing-works throughout the Dominion refused re-engagement upon the terms offered by the employers, which provided for reduced rates of wages. The stoppages were mostly of short duration so far as the works were concerned, as the freezing companies were able to engage sufficient labour and instituted the "chain" system of slaughtering. In the majority of the works affected the newly-engaged workers formed and registered separate unions, and in some cases entered into industrial agreements with their employers.

Coal-miners (Southland).—On the termination of the existing agreement the company operating one of the mines in the Nightcaps district proposed wage-reductions of 6d. per ton and claimed the right to engage and dismiss labour. After a lapse of thirty-eight working-days the men resumed work, the company's terms being almost wholly accepted.

Coal-miners (Stockton).—The men would not accept the new conditions of employment offered by the company and ceased work. Subsequently work was resumed on the company's terms, the company agreeing to withdraw notices of dismissal which had been served upon ninety-four of the employees. The stoppage lasted for twenty working-days.

LABOUR DISPUTES INVESTIGATION ACT, 1913.

During the year eleven agreements were filed pursuant to section 8 (1), the agreement in each case being reached without recourse to a conference under the Act or to a Labour Dispute Committee. These agreements were as follows :—

Retail butchers, Palmerston North; Gas Company's Clerical and Showroom employees, Auckland; Gas Company's employees, Auckland; Transport Board's coach and car builders, Auckland; Tramway omnibus and power-house employees, Christchurch; Power Board's employees, Wanganui; Dairy-factory Managers, Wellington District; Municipal Labourers and Drivers, Wanganui; Freezing Workers, Patea; Freezing Workers, Wanganui; Dairy-produce and Cold-storage Workers, Wellington.