

INDUSTRIAL DISTURBANCES DURING THE YEAR.

There were in all thirty-one industrial disturbances during the year. The following is a summary of the more serious stoppages :—

Maritime Workers.—The cooks and stewards on a number of vessels in Wellington ceased work, but resumed after nine days on the understanding that a conference would be arranged between the shipowners and the cooks' and stewards' and seamen's unions to discuss the restoration of wage "cuts."

Some weeks later about seventy seamen on coastal vessels in Greymouth demanded a restoration of the wage "cut" and refused to take their vessels to sea. Action was taken against them under the Shipping and Seamen Act and a term of fourteen days' imprisonment imposed, but they were released on the second day upon undertaking to proceed to sea. The crews of a number of coastal vessels in other ports also struck in sympathy with the seamen in Greymouth, but resumed upon their release.

In due course agreements were arrived at whereby both the cooks and stewards and the seamen received an increase in pay amounting to approximately half of the original reduction.

Printing Trades.—The employers' offer, in conciliation council, of an increase of approximately 5 per cent. in the wage-rate, plus certain other minor improvements, was not accepted, and the workers concerned held stop-work meetings in the four chief centres to consider the position. All continued to work with the exception of those employed in Wellington, who continued to press for the restoration of the whole of the "cuts." Their demands were not conceded by the employers and, after about ten days, work was resumed on the terms originally offered. An award, embodying these terms, was made later.

LABOUR DISPUTES INVESTIGATION ACT, 1913.

During the year thirteen 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 :—

- Chain-grocery store-managers, Canterbury.
- Clerical and showroom employees (Gas Co.'s), Auckland.
- Dairy-factory managers, Wellington Industrial District.
- Dairy-produce and cold-storage workers, Wellington.
- Electrical workers (South Canterbury Electric-power Board).
- Engine-drivers, firemen, pumpmen, &c. (Westland State coal-mines).
- Freezing-workers (South Otago).
- Gas company's employees (Auckland).
- Gas company's employees (Birkenhead).
- Theatrical and stage employees (Dunedin).
- Tramway employees, Auckland.
- Tramway engineers, Christchurch.
- Tramway, omnibus, and power-house employees, Christchurch.

Arising out of the disputes filed under the Act since its inception to date, only six ballots have been necessary, and in none of these cases did a strike take place in pursuance of such a ballot.

There were on the 31st March, 1935, fourteen agreements in force under this Act in the following industries :—

- Clerical and showroom employees (Gas Co.).
- Electrical workers.
- Electric-power board employees.
- Freezing-workers.
- Gas Co. employees.
- Glassworkers.
- Grocery-trade managers in chain-stores.
- Managers in dairy factories.
- Storage workers in dairy-produce and cold stores.
- Theatrical and stage employees.
- Tramway and omnibus services (including engineers and power-house employees).

APPRENTICES ACT.

This Act, which was passed in 1923, places the regulation of apprenticeships in the control of the Court of Arbitration. It also provides for the establishment of Committees representative of employers and workers; these have such powers as may be delegated to them by the Court.

The Committees, of which there are 94 functioning, are chiefly to be found in the main towns, and there is usually one for each industry. At the end of March, 1933, there were 105 Committees functioning, a reduction to 66 following the cancellation of awards and industrial agreements in accordance with the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. It had been held by the Court of Arbitration that on cancellation of an award or industrial agreement the Apprentices Act ceased to apply to the industry and locality concerned, but in view of the reversal of this decision by the Supreme Court a number of Committees regarded last year as no longer existing are apparently again functioning.

The Department has again made available to Committees the services of some of its experienced officers, who undertake inquiry work and in many cases act in a secretarial capacity. These officers made 81 special inspections under this Act during 1934–35. In addition, inspections were carried out in the course of ordinary inspection and investigation work and while visiting factories, &c., in connection with other duties.