

of employment and a partial statement of wages to the workmen engaged in the trade. The question was also raised as to the employment of men not belonging to trade-unions. In 1891 the men had approached the employers, and suggested that a statement should be drawn up acceptable to both sides. A conference was held, and an agreement made. By this agreement the manufacturers of one town, who had not been actively represented at the conference, refused to be bound, and a strike (known as the Auckland strike) ensued, in which the employers were successful. The conference met several times in ensuing years, but were powerless to bring about any general agreement. In 1896, on the matter being brought before the Conciliation Board, it was found that it was expedient to obtain judgment from the Court of Arbitration on certain points before the Board could proceed with the hearing of the case. On 7th July it was therefore laid before the Court of Arbitration; but that Court referred the dispute to the Board on the ground that certain items or subjects could not be separated from the whole, but that the Board must do its best to adjudicate upon the cause without separation of its parts. The Conciliation Board again proceeded with the interrupted evidence, and reported its recommendations as to minimum wage, freedom of contract, &c.; but these recommendations were not accepted by the workmen's union, and the matter was formally brought into the Arbitration Court on the 12th November, 1896, which gave an award taking effect until the 31st December, 1897. The most important decisions in the award are the rulings that employers shall give preference of employment to the members of the Federated Bootmakers' Union if they are equally qualified with non-members to perform the work required; that where unionists and non-unionists are employed together they shall work in harmony under the same conditions, and having equal pay for equal work; that employers may introduce any machinery they please, and subdivide the labour in connection with such machinery as they deem necessary; that the day should not exceed a nine-hours day, nor the week forty-eight hours. The overtime pay was noted; a minimum rate of wages was appointed to be fixed from time to time by the General Board of Conciliation to sit in September of each year; and a scale of proportion setting out the ratio of apprentices to journeymen, &c., in any branch of the bootmaking trade was arranged for. The very important matter contained in this judgment is the formal recognition of the trade-union by the Court—a recognition which was explained as based upon the value of labour organization in giving the workers corporate rights which they could not possess individually.

*Federated Seamen's Union.*—The Wellington Board of Conciliation met on the 18th February to consider a dispute arising between the Federated Seamen's Union and certain shipowners. The subject was the seamen's claim to—(a) a rise in wages; (b) an increase of overtime rates; (c) statutory holidays, such as Good Friday, Christmas Day, &c., on which if work was done it should be paid for as overtime; (d) permission for a representative of the Seamen's Union to visit members on board ship; (e) that union members should have preference in employment. The general line of argument used by the Seamen's Union was in the direction of proving that trade had greatly increased of late years, and therefore that the concessions asked for could in justice be made. The employers brought forward evidence in the direction of proof that, although the volume of trade had increased, competition had also increased and cut down rates of freight till there was small margin of profit. After several days' sitting the Conciliation Board gave its award to the effect that—(a) the wages of seamen and firemen should be raised 10s. per man per month; (b) that overtime should be paid only as formerly, but (c) that Boxing Day should be added to the statutory holidays; (d) that a representative of the union might visit the ships, but not in working-hours; (e) that union men should have preference of employment over non-union men when equally capable. This award was not favourably received by the Seamen's Union, and, after several attempts had been made to compromise, the dispute was carried to the Arbitration Court. The Court, however, was informed that its decision was only required in regard to two sections of the Conciliation Board's award—viz., to those relating to preference of employment for unionists, and as to the unionist official having the right to visit ships. Mr. Justice Williams, as Judge of the Arbitration Court, gave his award as follows: "The employers, in employing labour, shall not discriminate against members of the union. The employers shall not, in the engagement or dismissal of their hands or in the conduct of their business, do anything directly or indirectly for the purpose of injuring the union." The award contained a recommendation to steamship-owners to allow a union official to go on board their vessels and consult with seamen at reasonable times; this recommendation, however, not being intended to have the force of law, as the Judge did not consider that the Court had power to give a person liberty to enter upon a steamship or other property against the will of the owner.

*Federated Seamen's Union (Dunedin).*—This branch of the union brought a case before the Dunedin Board of Conciliation on the 4th February, in relation to the Union Steamship Company. The action arose from the refusal of the company to grant certain concessions asked for by the Seamen's Union in regard to increase of wages, overtime, recognition of statutory holidays, preferential employment of unionists, membership in the company's benefit society, selection of crews by agents, and permission for one of the seamen's representatives to visit the ships. A draft agreement, introduced as being agreeable to both parties in the case, was submitted to the Conciliation Board, and the Board expressed its willingness to allow this agreement to be considered as its decision. Much debate took place between the officials of the company and of the union as to certain points in the agreement, but at last finality was attained, and the agreement was signed on the 20th May, 1897, as being made "in pursuance of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act." It uniformly increased the wages of all seamen, firemen, trimmers, &c., in the company's service by the additional payment of 10s. a head per month. The company was given the option of employing non-union men, but there was to be no preference in their favour, nor against a unionist being employed. Membership of the company's private benefit society was to be no longer compulsory; but the agent of the Seamen's Union was not to visit the men on board ship. The term of agreement was for two years as from the 1st of March, 1897, and any breach of it was to be