

MAY, 1897.

Wellington.

*Seamen's Dispute.*—The Arbitration Court met to consider the dispute. The shipowners had refused to accept the decision of the Board in April with regard to the last two clauses, viz.: (1) That preference be given to members of the Seamen's Union; and (2) the provision that a representative of the union be permitted to visit members on board ship except during working-hours be allowed. They agreed to all the other clauses, and the union agreed to the whole recommendation. The award of the Court was as follows:—

(1.) The Court did not see its way clear to alter the existing state of things, which gave the shipowner the power to employ union or non-union men. The Court pointed out that the case of the seamen was different from that of the Christchurch bootmakers, where the Court decided that union men should have the preference, inasmuch as the boot-making shops had been and were purely union shops, whereas the steamers had been manned by both union and non-union men. (2.) The Court recommends that the secretary of the union be permitted access to the boats of the employers at reasonable times, out of business hours, for the purpose of communicating with the members of the union on union business, if he conducts himself properly and undertakes not to make use of the boats for the purpose of discussing matters in difference between the union and the employers.

Clauses 1, 2, and 3, as agreed on by the parties, would be embodied in the award. Clause 4 was merely a recommendation, and would not be so embodied. The award would take effect from the 1st March last, and would continue in force for two years.

Christchurch.

*Painters' Dispute.*—The Board met on the 17th May to consider a dispute between the Painters' Union and the employers. The union filed the following reference against twenty-four masters: "Failing to comply with the rules of the union; also with failing to meet the union in conference to settle questions of wages, employment, apprentices, and overtime."

The following is the statement put forth by the Christchurch Union of Painters:—

**General Rules:** General rules to be the rules of the Christchurch Painters' Union. Notwithstanding anything that may appear contrary in the aforementioned rules, the following shall be the conditions of labour:—

**Conditions of Labour:** (a.) The recognised hours of work shall be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on five days of the week, and from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays. One hour to be allowed each day for dinner (Saturdays excepted), from the 1st September to the 30th April (both inclusive). (b.) And from the 1st May to the 31st August one half-hour for dinner, and to leave off work at 4.30 p.m.; Saturdays, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. (c.) All time worked outside the aforementioned hours to be considered overtime, and to be paid for at the rate of time and a half.

**Rate of Wages:** (a.) All men of the age of twenty-one years and upwards (except those hereinafter mentioned), working at any branch of the trade for any employer, shall be paid not less than 1s. per hour; but men over fifty years of age may work for less if they think fit. (b.) All men to produce satisfactory proof of their age if called upon by the union to do so.

**Union Men to have Preference:** Employers on receiving applications for employment shall give the preference to union men, according to Rule 17 of general rules.

**Holidays:** The following are the holidays to be observed: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Queen's Birthday, Labour Day, Prince of Wales's Birthday, Anniversary Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day. All workmen and apprentices required to work on the aforementioned holidays to be paid not less than time and a half.

**Funds:** Employers to assist in collecting the funds of the union.

**Employment of Apprentices:** (1.) No legal agreement in existence on the day of acceptance of this statement to be interfered with. (2.) All apprentices shall serve for a term of five years, and shall not exceed the age of sixteen years when their apprenticeship begins. Apprentices to be kept constantly employed when able to work.

**Unforeseen Circumstances:** Should an employer from some unforeseen cause be unable to carry out his obligation to his apprentices, it shall be allowed for the apprentice to complete his term with another employer, and the employer having his full complement of apprentices shall not prevent him from making such agreement.

All the employers stated that they were willing to abide by any decision arrived at by a majority of the employers.

The Board drew up a statement of a recommendation as follows:—

In the statement as submitted to the Board the words "conditions of labour" should read "conditions of employment." Rule 1, relating to hours of employment, would be the same as section (a) in the statement, and Rule 2 the same as section (b). Rule 3 would be as follows: "All men of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, except those hereinafter mentioned, shall be paid not less than 1s. per hour." Rule 4 would provide that young men who had worked two years continuously, and were not more than nineteen years of age, should be allowed two more years to complete their service. Rule 5, subject to Rule 8 (union men to have preference), would provide for less than 1s. being paid to men not considered competent, the lesser sum to be agreed upon by a Board consisting of representatives of masters and men, and such sum not to be paid less than 6s. per day. Rule 6 would provide for overtime after the hours specified in the statement being paid at the rate of time and a quarter for first four hours, and time and a half afterwards. The same conditions to apply to holidays (Rule 7). Rule 8 would provide for union men, when competent, having the preference; and added to this would be a proviso that employers should give twenty-four hours' notice to the secretary of the union before employing a non-union man. Rule 9: Employers to place no obstacle in the way of collection of union funds, if that were done after working-hours. Rule 10: The employment of apprentices to be the same as Rule 20 in the general rules; the proportion of apprentices to be left in abeyance for the masters and men to confer upon the matter; a proviso being added that all apprentices now serving under verbal agreement should be allowed to complete their term, subject to a proper agreement being entered into. Rule 11 to be the same as the provision in the statement for "unforeseen circumstances." Rule 12, as to suburban and country work, would be the same as applied to the carpenters.

The Board proposed that these conditions should be from date, and that they should be entered into for twelve months.

The Arbitration Court also dealt with this case in May. (See p. viii.)

JULY, 1897.

Christchurch.

*Building-trade Dispute.*—In the Arbitration Court the recommendations of the Board during April were all agreed to by the union excepting clause 1, viz.: "That the minimum rate of wages be 10s. per day," which was altered by the Court as follows: "That the minimum wage for a tradesman competent for the work in which he is employed shall be 10s. per day. Men who are considered to be unable to earn the minimum wage shall be paid such lesser sum, if any, as a committee of employers and workmen shall agree upon, or if they cannot agree the matter shall be