

Dunedin (24).—Two men employed at a sawmill—one was struck by a piece of timber thrown off by the planing-machine; the other was struck in the face by a piece of timber thrown back from a circular-saw. The remaining twenty-two cases were of a very slight nature.

Milton (1, fatal).—This fatal accident was caused by Hislop, the deceased, getting caught while reversing the belt driving a wringing-machine. He was taken several times round the shaft. The jury brought in the following verdict: "That the said Walter Hislop was a workman at the Bruce Woollen Factory at work in the washing department, which was done by machinery. That for this work a belt had to be shifted about once an hour for the purpose of alternately working two machines. That for that purpose he was putting the belt on the pulley on the high shaft when by accident the belt near the machines got loose, and the effect was that his part of the belt got fast on the shaft, and, winding up, caught him in a loop and carried him round the shaft, with the result that he was maimed and died." The jury added the following rider: "The present jury considers the method of working this portion of the machinery unsafe, and would suggest that the Inspector of Machinery should examine this and other similar movements and see that effectual means be taken for changing the machinery so as to secure the safety of the workmen."

Invercargill (3).—A man employed at an implement-factory had his leg broken through a saw-bench falling on him. The remaining two cases were of a very slight nature.

The department receives exhaustive reports on all the accidents which occur, especially those which involve loss of life or limb. The department endeavours at all times to work with the Inspectors of Machinery in insisting on the use of safeguards, so as to minimise the risks of those employed about machinery.

DISPUTES UNDER "THE INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT, 1894," DURING THE YEAR 1898-99.

APRIL, 1898.

Wellington.

Tailoresses' Dispute (before the Conciliation Board).—Dispute between the Tailoresses' Union and the employers of the city. Some twenty-seven employers had been served with summonses. Those present were: Messrs. Allan (of Veitch and Allan, and president of the Master Tailors' Union), Shine, A. Paterson, and D. Milligan (of Berry and Orr).

The union demands were:—

(1) That employers pay according to the Wellington Tailors' Union time-statement of the 25th May, 1897, at the rate of 8d. per hour (less pressing) to all tailoresses employed on piecework; (2) that wages of weekly hands be: Coat-hands, £1 17s. 6d.; vest-hands, £1 10s.; trouser-hands, £1 10s.; machine-hands—first-class £1 15s., second-class £1 10s.; (3) that the number of apprentices or improvers be limited to one to every five or fraction of the first five operatives fully employed; (4) that apprentices and improvers be indentured—coat-hands for three years, vest-hands, trouser-makers, and machining-hands, one year; (5) that apprentices be paid not less than 2s. 6d. weekly for the first, 5s. for the second, 7s. 6d. for the third, and 10s. for the fourth three months of the first year, and thereafter an increase of 2s. 6d. at the end of each six months till the end of apprenticeship; (6) that overtime be paid for at the rate of time and a quarter; (7) that members of the Tailoresses' Union be employed in preference if equally competent with the non-unionist; (8) that all ordered work be done in the shop of the employer; and (9) that employers shall not discriminate against the members of the union.

The employers submitted a log which they thought should meet all cases, but the union did not accept.

The Board, in making the award, said the principal difficulty encountered by the Board was in regard to the first clause of the claim, in which the tailoresses desired that the log arranged by the Board about two months before for the tailors should be adopted on behalf of the tailoresses, with the exception that they should receive 8d. instead of 1s. per hour. That at first sight appeared exceedingly simple; but, on going into the matter and hearing both sides, an unforeseen difficulty was discovered, so serious in nature that at one time members had almost despaired of bringing matters to a satisfactory conclusion. This arose, not from any ill-feeling or want of forbearance on either side—because the manner in which the dispute had been conducted was most praiseworthy—but the employers had not been able to see their way clear to adopt one log for all cases, from the fact of the difference between tailors and tailoresses. The former could all work under one head, but tailoresses, on the contrary, could not, there being so many different grades—about four—in the city. It was suggested by one of the witnesses that the difference was more in appearance than in reality, amounting, when analysed, to the addition of machine-work, inasmuch as in hand-work the grades went downward in ratio as hand-work decreased and machine-work increased, and that by an exhaustive machinery log one statement might meet all cases. This view of the matter had only been made recently, but both sides seemed to see that it afforded a way out of the difficulty. An adjournment was made for a fortnight to enable the employers to make a fair log, and the employes to do similarly, by that means getting the parties closer to one another. Mr. Fisher suggested that both sides should employ an expert to take the matter in hand and assist the Board. Following this proposal, the employers had nominated Mr. King to represent them, and the employes named Mr. Graham. By the assistance of these two gentlemen a conclusion had been arrived at which would not have been possible without their aid, and the Chairman took the opportunity of expressing the thanks and obligation the Board was under for the care they bestowed on the question. A log had thus been compiled for pieceworkers, and it was hoped that this, with the decisions in regard to weekly-wages hands and others, would prove acceptable. The full terms of the award were:—