

REGISTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIONS.

The usual statutory return (to 31st December, 1940) giving a list of associations and unions on the register at that date, together with the membership thereto, is appended hereto.

Employers unions number 269, as against 264 last year (an increase of 5), with a total membership of 11,169, compared with 9,893 last year (an increase of 1,276), 5 new unions being registered.

Workers' unions number 432, compared with 442 last year (a decrease of 10), with a total membership of 248,031, as against 254,664 (a decrease of 6,583). New registrations totalled 12 and cancellations 22.

INDUSTRIAL DISTURBANCES DURING THE YEAR.

There were 49 industrial disturbances during the year, compared with 70 last year and 68 the year before. These absences involved lost time equivalent to 24,082 working-days, compared with 43,776 working-days lost the previous year. Of these disturbances, 20 were in the mining industry, 7 in the shipping and waterfront industry, and 12 in the freezing industry.

To facilitate the settlement of industrial disputes, the Minister of Labour was given power, under the Strike and Lockout Emergency Regulations 1939 (Serial number 1939/204), to set up an Emergency Disputes Committee. Following is a summary of the matters so far dealt with under this authority:—

Details of the Denniston coal-miners' case were included in last year's report.

Some employees of a Woolpack and Flax Textile Factory in Foxton were absent upon resumption of activities after the Christmas vacation, 1939, and were dismissed. One of the workers dismissed had been a witness in proceedings for a new award in the previous November, and it was alleged that he had been victimized. The Committee decided, in view of the previous attitude to irregular attendance and the absence of award provisions as to notice of termination of employment, that the management employ those workers who had offered themselves for employment since the holiday period and were still available for work.

Because of demands for increased remuneration the oyster fleet in the Bluff was idle for a week during March, 1940. These demands were partly conceded, but the payment to be made to boatmen involving questions of the method of box or sack measurement was in abeyance until the appointment of an Emergency Disputes Committee, the decision of which appears in Book of Awards, Vol. XL, page 618. This decision did not entirely dispose of the matter, for in February, 1941, a further dispute occurred concerning the size and method of filling sacks. The Emergency Disputes Committee again dealt with this, the decision being recorded in Book of Awards, Vol. XLI, page 209.

Tramway transport in Auckland was disrupted from 30th April, 1940, until 3rd May, 1940, when normal running was resumed, the disruption arising out of a demand for a cost-of-living increase not being met. The Emergency Disputes Committee found that the increase was provided for by the agreement under which the men were working, and decided that wages be increased by 8 per cent. from 1st April, 1940. Because of this increase exemptions from the general order pursuant to the Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940 were granted (see Book of Awards, Vol. XL, pages 1551 and 1567).

In September, 1940, employees of a Westland gold dredge decided to discontinue working on Sundays until demands for wage-increase, an eight-hour-maximum day on Sundays, alteration of overtime rates, introduction of fortnightly pays, and a rearrangement of shifts were conceded. While this dispute was still unsettled the men were dismissed for refusing to work on the King's birthday, which was observed on 26th November, 1940. This matter was referred to an Emergency Disputes Committee, which decided that the men were entitled, under the award, to observe King's birthday as a non-working day, that the employers were wrong in terminating the contracts of service, and that the employers should pay for time lost during the first two days of the stoppage, it being considered that work should have been resumed then following an assurance by the Minister of Labour that the Committee would deal with the matter.

Approximately 300 out of 500 employees of a Wellington tobacco-manufacturer ceased work for eight days because of the dismissal of a worker who at the time of his dismissal was an executive member of the industrial union, it being alleged that his dismissal was because of his union activities. Following resumption of work an Emergency Disputes Committee sat, the decision being that the worker was dismissed constitutionally in accordance with the provisions of the award and not because of his activities on behalf of his union. Arising out of this cessation of work cancellation powers contained in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act, 1939, were exercised (see *New Zealand Gazette* of 12th November, 1940). This constitutes the second occasion on which these powers have been used, the first occasion being in connection with the Otahuhu Chemical-manure Workers Industrial Union of Workers in July, 1939.

The general order of the Court of Arbitration, pursuant to an application in terms of the Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940, increased by 5 per cent. all rates of remuneration payable under awards, &c. Piece-workers in the Martha Gold-mine claimed this increase, but the employers declined to grant it as the rates of pay were not specified in the award. During the discussions it appeared that the management desired to effect increases in charges for explosives because of rising costs. The decision of the Committee provided for the payment of a 5-per-cent. cost-of-living bonus calculated on the net earning of the workers over the various four-weekly periods, also for increases up to 5 per cent. on the charges for explosives where landed cost has increased.

Dissatisfaction with contract rates arose at the Blackwater Mines. Employment for a period subsequently was on day-wages, and, it being the opinion of the employer that "go slow" was in operation, one man, who had been warned previously, was dismissed. The miners then discontinued employment, but resumed on the understanding that an Emergency Disputes Committee would investigate the matter. It was decided by the committee that the employer had reasonable grounds for the dismissal, but it was ordered in the special circumstances that he be re-employed, the employer to have the right of dismissal should his work prove unsatisfactory.