

to the fact that owing to the early date on which this report has been prepared this year a number of returns are not yet in.

*Decisions of Arbitration Court of Special Interest.*

In the case of the Wellington Building Trades Labourers, the Court refused to grant preference to the union owing to the fact that it was a party to an illegal strike in 1913. (Book of Awards, Vol. xvi, p. 81.)

The application of the Wellington Ships' Tally Clerks' Industrial Union of Workers for an award was refused on the ground that the union was not fairly representative of the workers in the industry, and that there was no genuine dispute. (Book of Awards, Vol. xvi, p. 95.)

In the Wellington Marine Cooks and Stewards' award the Court has, at the request of the union, made an effort to abolish the practice of "tipping." Increased wages have been granted, and the taking of "tips" has been prohibited. (Book of Awards, Vol. xvi, p. 270.)

On the 2nd November, 1913, the Greymouth Wharf Labourers' Industrial Union of Workers, though a party to an existing award, went out on strike. A new union was formed and registered under the Act, and entered into an agreement with the Union Steamship Company (Limited). During the year under review the old union brought an action against the company for employing members of the new union in breach of the preference clause in the award. The Court held that the award was no longer binding owing to the strike. (Book of Awards, Vol. xvi, p. 554.)

*Industrial Disturbances.*

One strike of some magnitude, besides a few of a minor nature, took place during the year, as follow:—

(1.) Petone Woollen-mill: The workers employed in this mill, numbering 233, claimed an increase in wages of 10 per cent. (on account of allegedly increased profits made by the company as the outcome of large orders for supplies of goods for the Expeditionary Forces, and also on account of the increased cost of living). The company offered a 5 per cent. increase together with certain bonuses, but this was not deemed sufficient by the workers' union, and after negotiation for some time the workers gave a week's notice, and on the 17th March discontinued their employment. The dispute was, on the 31st March, unsettled. As the workers are bound by an industrial agreement under the Act, the matter has been referred to the Crown Law Office for advice as to whether a breach of the strike provisions of the Act has been committed, with a view to legal proceedings being taken.

(2.) The firemen and seamen on the Union Steamship Company's "Pateena," after having completed their contract of service on the coastal trade in New Zealand, claimed from £15 to £18 each for a trip to Australia, or a guarantee of six months' employment in Australia. They refused to sign fresh articles for the Australian trip unless their claim was conceded. After the lapse of two days, during which the discharging and loading of the steamer took place, the dispute was settled by certain increases being paid. As the men did not break any contract of service, but merely refused to enter into another, no offence under the Act was committed.

(3.) The firemen and seamen of the s.s. "Victoria" also discontinued employment, declining to take the ship to Sydney, after trading for some months on the coast of New Zealand, unless extra rates were paid for the trip. After a delay of three days the dispute was settled by certain increases being granted. Action against the workers was contemplated, but it was found that, as the articles signed by the crew were for a voyage beginning and terminating in Sydney, the New Zealand Act did not apply.

(4.) A number of wharf labourers at Wellington were engaged to discharge oils from s.s. "Physsa." Owing to the bad ventilation of the ship and to the requirements of the Customs officers that work in the hold should cease at 4 p.m. the men demanded an increase from 1s. 5d. to 2s. per hour for this work. The boat was laid up for three days and a half, when the dispute was settled, it being held that the claim was reasonable. Although bound by an industrial agreement most of the men did not commit an offence under the Act, not having broken their contract, but having merely refused to accept fresh employment.

(5.) Wellington Builders' Labourers: The secretary of the union requested an employer to induce a non-unionist who had been employed by this employer for eighteen years to join the union. On refusal the workers left their employment, but on different days. Action was taken against the workers for a breach of the strike provisions of the Act, and also against the secretary of the union for instigating the strike. The case was dismissed on the ground that it was not proved that the action of the men in discontinuing employment was a result of the trouble with the non-unionist.

(6.) Wellington Wharf Labourers engaged discharging s.s. "Dalmore": In this case six wharf labourers refused to discharge coal, claiming certain higher rates than prescribed by the Wharf Labourers' agreement. The s.s. "Dalmore" was chartered by the Defence authorities, and at the time the men struck work the ship was being fitted up as a transport. Action was taken against each of the workers for a breach of the Act. The Magistrate held that the action of the workers was a strike, but that as the real employer of the men was not a party to the agreement the workers could not be convicted.

(7.) S.s. "Maori": The stokehold crew left the ship in a body owing to one of their number having been dismissed. This matter is now being dealt with.

*SHEARERS' AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.*

During the year the accommodation for shearers on a large number of sheep-stations has been inspected, and further improvements have resulted therefrom.

Arrangements were made with the Health Department during the year for another systematic and joint inspection of the accommodation provided for flax-mill workers in the Manawatu district. It was found necessary in a few cases to serve notices on the owners to effect improvements.