

PROSECUTIONS.

There were 285 prosecutions for breaches of awards and agreements other than stoppages of work, 238 against employers and 47 against workers; 241 convictions were recorded, 197 against employers and 44 against workers; 25 prosecutions were taken for miscellaneous breaches of the Act other than strikes, 23 against employers and 2 against workers; 23 convictions were obtained, 22 against employers and 1 against a worker; 315 workers were fined for striking or otherwise ceasing employment, and 1 union and 1 worker were fined for instigating such cessations of work.

UNION ACCOUNTS.

There has been no occasion during the year to call for an audit of the accounts of any union; a few instances have been brought under the notice of unions, however, of small amounts of union funds being used for purposes not authorized by the Act.

LEGAL DECISIONS OF INTEREST.

(1.) *Incapacity of Apprentice*.—The permanent incapacity of an apprentice terminates a contract of apprenticeship, but temporary incapacity does not, and during any temporary incapacity wages must be paid unless the award or contract authorizes deductions to be made, or until the contract is terminated; continued absence may form a ground for terminating it. In a number of cases provision is now made authorizing deductions during absence caused by sickness.

(2.) *Membership of Union*.—Where a union's right to preference depended on its rules providing for the admission to membership of any person "of good character and sober habits," a provision in the rules permitting a refusal to admit a person of quarrelsome, violent, and aggressive temperament did not deprive the union of that right, the term "good character" being properly given a wide meaning. It was also held that although a union's right to preference depends on its rules complying with the conditions upon which preference was granted, a deliberate infraction of the rules may disentitle the union to preference.

(3.) *Membership of Union*.—Under the recent Waterside Workers' award an interesting innovation was made by the Court of Arbitration in order to decasualize waterside work as far as possible. The award provides for the usual preference for members of the unions affiliated to the Waterside Workers' Association notwithstanding that by agreement with the employers the association may have fixed a limit to the total number of workers that may belong to its affiliated unions. Hitherto and in all cases preference has been granted only on condition that membership was open to all workers of good character and sober habits on payment of reasonable entrance fees and subscriptions.

INDUSTRIAL DISTURBANCES.

There were fifty-one industrial disturbances during the year, of which forty-three may be classed as unimportant or trivial. The following is a brief summary of the remaining eight disturbances:—

(1.) *State Coal-miners, Rewanui*.—For using abusive language to an interviewer a miner was not permitted to start work, and one hundred men ceased work in protest, but resumed the following day. Proceedings were taken under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and penalties were imposed.

(2.) *Coal-miners, Hikurangi*.—The action of the mine-manager in dismissing a worker whose coal-output was not considered sufficient was regarded as victimization, and 250 men ceased work in protest. After a cessation of a month the union admitted mistake, and work was resumed upon the company's complying with a request to reinstate the man dismissed. It was decided not to take proceedings for the breach that occurred.

(3.) *Railway Employees (Government)*.—Approximately twelve thousand Railway servants of the Second Division, the majority of whom were members of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, went on strike at midnight on Easter Monday last year with the object of securing increased wages and improved conditions of employment; practically all railway traffic was stopped and many persons were unable to return from their holidays; a number of trains were, however, run and the number rapidly increased. Within a few days a disinclination to continue the strike manifested itself among the men, and upon the Government's refusal to discuss demands until the men returned to work the strike was called off, eight days after its commencement. A tribunal was then set up by the Government to examine the grievances of the men, and its report was duly adopted by Cabinet. Amongst the items was an offer of increased weekly pay for longer hours of work to workshops employees; a ballot of these workers resulted in a continuation of the existing forty-four-hours week. No breach of the Act occurred, as the men were employees of the Crown.

(4.) *Coal-miners, Ohai and Nghtcaps*.—The owners charged the men in three safety-lamp mines with the cost of electric detonators, which during the currency of the former award it had been the custom to supply free; the owners considered that concessions in the new award had been given in lieu thereof; 197 miners ceased work for a period of fourteen days and fifty later ceased work for a further period of six days. At a conference of the employers and the workers, the workers demanded a review of twenty-eight clauses of the new award; the employers agreed to pay an extra 2d. per ton on the tonnage rates to cover the cost of the detonators, and the men returned to work. Proceedings were instituted for the first stoppage, and penalties were imposed.

(5.) *Coal-miners, Ohai*.—Seventy Linton coal-miners ceased work and demanded an increase in pillar and solid rates fixed by the new award; their demands were partially conceded, and they returned to work after an absence of eighteen days. As the men were already being prosecuted for a previous stoppage—*vide* (4) above—no action was taken.