

WAGES IN NEW ZEALAND.

A comparison has been made between the minimum rates of wages required under awards and the rates of wages generally paid to adult male workers (other than foremen) in a number of the principal occupations in the four chief centres in New Zealand. From this comparison the following information is given:—

| Industry. | Award Rates. | Rates generally paid. |
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| | Per Hour. | Per Hour. |
| Bricklayers | 2s. 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. and 2s. 4d. .. | 2s. 6d. to 3s. |
| Carpenters and joiners | 2s. 3d. and 2s. 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. .. | 2s. 4d. to 2s. 6d. |
| Electrical workers | 2s. 2d. and 2s. 3d. .. | 2s. 3d. to 2s. 6d. |
| Painters | 2s. 3d. | 2s. 3d. to 2s. 6d. |
| Plasterers | 2s. 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., 2s. 4d., and 2s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. | 2s. 6d. to 3s. |
| Plumbers | 2s. 2d. and 2s. 3d. .. | 2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d. |
| Stonemasons | 1s. 9d., 2s. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., 2s. 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., and 2s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. | 2s. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 2s. 6d. |
| Bakers | 2s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. | 2s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 2s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. |
| Boilermakers, engineers, motor engineers, moulders, sheet-metal workers, tinsmiths | 2s. 3d. | 2s. 3d. |
| Bootmakers | 1s. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. | 1s. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to 2s. 2d. |
| Cabinetmakers | 2s. 3d. | 2s. 3d. to 2s. 6d. |
| Engine-drivers | 2s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 2s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. .. | 2s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 2s. 6d. |
| Tailors | 1s. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. and 2s. 2d. .. | 1s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 2s. 6d. |
| Waterside workers | 2s. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. | 2s. 4d. |

REGISTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIONS.

The usual statutory return (to the 31st December, 1926) of the associations and unions registered under the Act, with their membership at that date, is published herewith as an appendix. Comparison with the previous year shows that the total number of workers' unions has increased by one, but the total membership has decreased by 873. The decrease in membership is due to the de-registration of a coal-miners' union with a membership of three hundred, which now, with several other miners' unions, carries on its negotiations for conditions of employment outside of the Act; also to the de-registration of one of the seamen's unions, which has, however, again registered this year. Otherwise there has been a slight increase in the membership of registered unions. The large unions of workers that have elected to remain outside the Act were at the end of the year nine coal-miners' unions (comprising 2,302 members at the time of de-registration), while eleven other coal-miners' unions are still registered (with 1,913 members), two marine engineers' unions (comprising 634 members), and one tramway employees' union (249 members). The total number of employers' unions has decreased by two.

INSPECTIONS.

During the year 3,229 complaints of breaches of awards and industrial agreements, &c., were received and investigated. Apart from these, a large proportion of the general inspections of factories, shops, &c., totalling 34,794, included an inspection to ascertain whether the awards and agreements were being compiled with in respect of wages, overtime, &c.

PROSECUTIONS.

There were 381 prosecutions for breaches of awards and agreements other than stoppages of work, 326 against employers and 55 against workers; 327 convictions were recorded. Fourteen other prosecutions against employers were taken for miscellaneous breaches of the Act, and ten convictions were obtained. Forty-nine workers were prosecuted for striking or otherwise ceasing employment (two strikes), and a conviction was obtained in one case (thirty-five workers); the other case was dismissed.

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.

Application for Award.—On an application for an award covering motor and horse drivers it appeared that only twenty-six drivers out of over one hundred and twenty in the district applied for membership of the union. Many of the witnesses called for the employers were drivers, who stated that they were satisfied with their present conditions of employment. The Court of Arbitration considered that it must give due weight to the opinion of the workers who gave evidence, and in the circumstances refused to make an award. (Book of Awards, Vol. XXVI, p. 861.)