

Arising out of the disputes filed under the Act since its inception to date, only six ballots have been necessary, and in none of these cases did a strike take place in pursuance of such a ballot.

There are ten agreements in force under this Act, in the following industries :—

Coal-mining.
 Marine engineers and shift engineers in freezing-works and power-houses.
 Gas-manufacture (including clerical and showroom employees).
 Glass-manufacture.
 Tramway and omnibus services (including coach and car building).
 Meat-preserving.
 Managers in dairy factories.

APPRENTICES ACT.

This Act, which was passed in 1923, places the regulation of apprenticeships in the control of the Court of Arbitration. It also provides for the establishment of committees representative of employers and workers; these have such powers as may be delegated to them by the Court.

Since the Act came into operation 143 committees have been set up, but of these at least nine are not now functioning. As may be expected, the committees are chiefly to be found in the main towns, and there is usually one for each industry.

The Department has again made available to committees the services of some of its experienced officers, who undertake inquiry work and in many cases act in a secretarial capacity. These officers made 2,955 inspections under this Act during 1930–31, the inspections being carried out chiefly in the course of ordinary inspection and investigation work and while visiting factories, &c., in connection with other duties.

Complaints were received regarding 363 breaches of the Act, while 241 other breaches were discovered by the Department's Inspectors, 341 warnings being issued.

There were 50 prosecutions during the year for various breaches of the Act and the orders made thereunder, convictions being entered in 36 of the cases, and penalties amounting to £44 Is. being imposed. Of the prosecutions, 27 were against employers and 23 against apprentices.

The following table gives the approximate number of apprentices in the trades to which the Act applies. This information is based mainly on contracts of apprenticeship as registered with the Department. Chemists' apprentices are omitted this year because the Act does not now apply (1930 amendment).

RETURN SHOWING NUMBER OF APPRENTICES EMPLOYED IN SKILLED TRADES, APRIL, 1931.

Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.	Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.	Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.
Baking	371	Electrical	630	Plumbing	679
Boatbuilding	41	Engineering	1,052	Plastering	198
Boilermaking	72	Motor-engineering	1,172	Printing	703
Bootmaking	216	Furniture	643	Saddlery	38
Boot-repairing	46	Gardening	19	Sail, tent, &c.	3
Blacksmithing	31	Hairdressing	162	Tailoring	27
Bricklaying	81	Hatmaking	2	Tinsmithing	150
Carpentering	1,426	Jewellery	54	Wicker-working	37
Clothing	64	Leadlight	29		
Coachbuilding	367	Masonry	35	Total	8,901
Coopering	7	Moulding	95		
Cycle-working	44	Painting	407		

AMENDMENT OF ACT.

The Act was amended last year to give effect to a number of the recommendations contained in the report of the Conference of Apprenticeship Committees held in 1929.

ARREARS OF WAGES.

Amounts totalling £6,188 16s. 10d. were collected by the Department's officers on behalf of workers who had been underpaid the wages prescribed by awards and the various Acts, while further amounts of such arrears, totalling £4,538 15s. 4d., were paid by employers, at the instance of the Inspectors, directly to the workers concerned; total, £10,727 12s. 2d.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

The following cases have been heard and determined by the Court of Arbitration during the last five years: 1926, 60; 1927, 99; 1928, 99; 1929, 101; 1930, 123.

A summary of the more important cases is contained in "New Zealand Workers' Compensation Cases," which is published annually by the Department.