

INDUSTRIAL DISTURBANCES DURING THE YEAR.

There were in all sixteen industrial disturbances during the year. The following is a summary of the more serious stoppages—

Seamen and Firemen.—The seamen and firemen on a number of intercolonial and coastal vessels ceased work, refusing to accept a proposal by the owners for a further reduction of 5 per cent. in the rates of pay in addition to the 10-per-cent. reduction already in operation. The cooks and stewards, although not affected by the proposed reduction, ceased work in sympathy. Some delay in shipping was occasioned, but the more important services were maintained. After about ten days, a conference between the parties agreed upon a 2½-per-cent. reduction, and work was resumed.

Waterside Workers.—The waterside workers in several ports refused to work overtime on a number of ships unless the shore gangs were paid for the same hours as the gangs employed on the hatches. In one case the Department proceeded against the fifty-eight men concerned for a breach of section 9 of the Labour Disputes Investigation Act, 1913, and obtained judgment against each of the defendants. The men have appealed against the convictions, but the cases have not yet been heard by the Court of Arbitration.

LABOUR DISPUTES INVESTIGATION ACT, 1913.

During the year thirteen agreements were filed pursuant to section 8 (1), the agreement in each case being reached without recourse to a conference under the Act or to a Labour Dispute Committee. These agreements were as follows :—

Tramway, omnibus, and power-house employees, Christchurch.
Tramway employees, Auckland.
Tramway and omnibus employees (traffic section), Christchurch.
Glassworkers, Auckland.
Coal-miners, Waikato.
Dairy factory managers, Wellington Industrial District.
Tramway workshops employees, Christchurch.
Tramway, omnibus, and power-house employees, Christchurch.
Chain grocery store employees, Canterbury.
Dairy-produce and cold storage workers, Wellington.
Hardware-merchants employees, Wellington.
Tramway, omnibus, and power-house employees, Christchurch.
Clerical and showroom employees (Gas Co.'s) Auckland.

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 were on the 31st March, 1934, twelve agreements in force under this Act in the following industries :—

Tramway and omnibus services (including power-house employees).
Grocery trade employees in chain-stores.
Managers in dairy factories.
Storage workers in dairy-produce and cold stores.
Hardware-merchants' assistants (wholesale).
Glassworkers.
Coal-miners.
Clerical and showroom employees (Gas Co.).

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.

The Committees, of which there are 66 functioning, are chiefly to be found in the main towns, and there is usually one for each industry. At the end of the previous year there were 105 Committees functioning, the reduction following upon the cancellation of awards and industrial agreements in accordance with the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, it having been held by the Court that on cancellation of an award or industrial agreement the Apprentices Act ceased to apply to the industry and locality concerned.

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 106 inspections under this Act during 1933-34, 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 130 alleged breaches of the Act, while 12 other breaches were discovered by the Department's Inspectors, 95 warnings being issued.

There were 7 prosecutions during the year for various breaches of the Act and the orders made thereunder, convictions being entered in 6 of the cases, and penalties amounting to £5 5s. 6d. being imposed. Of the prosecutions, 2 were against employers and 5 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.