

The Department has no definite information as to the number of workers covered by awards in particular industries, but taking as a basis the number of workers who are members of unions (249,231) it is estimated that 184,454, or 74 per cent., are enjoying a forty-hour week. Of this number, only 21,115 are required to work on six days. The remaining 26 per cent. of workers who are required to work more than forty hours are principally shop-assistants; private-hotel, boarding-house, and restaurant employees; drivers; seamen; marine cooks and stewards; freezing-works employees; and shearers.

INSPECTIONS, &c.

During the year 8,896 complaints of alleged breaches of the Act and of awards and industrial agreements, &c., were received, but it was found on investigation that in 2,956 cases no breach had been committed. In 458 cases proceedings were taken, and in 3,990 warnings were given. No action was considered necessary in the remaining cases. Apart from the complaints mentioned above, a large proportion of the inspections of factories, shops, &c., included an inspection to ascertain whether the awards and agreements were being complied with in respect of wages, overtime, &c., and as a result of these inspections 114 prosecutions were taken, and warnings were given in other cases. Of the 572 prosecutions, 525 were against employers and 47 against workers; 407 convictions were recorded, 366 against employers and 41 against workers. Total penalties, £490 4s. 6d.

REGISTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIONS.

The usual statutory return (to 31st December, 1938) giving a list of associations and unions on the register at that date, together with registered offices and membership, is appended hereto.

Comparison with the previous year shows that employers' unions number 248, as against 239 for last year (an increase of 9), with a total membership of 9,131, compared with 8,441 last year (an increase of 690), twelve new unions being registered and three cancelled. Workers' unions number 466, as against 501 last year (a decrease of 35), with a total membership of 249,231, compared with 232,986 (an increase of 16,245). New registrations totalled 28 and cancellations 63. In almost every case cancellation was due either to the desire of a small union for absorption by a larger union in the same district or to the union's concurrence in the registration of a new union to cover two or more industrial districts, thereby bringing about the cancellation of its own registration and the absorption of its members into the new organization.

The provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act, 1936, permitting of the registration of unions covering the whole Dominion, the whole of the North or South Island, or any group of two or more industrial districts have been further utilized by industrial organizations of both employers and workers. Up to 31st May, 1939, 47 organizations (last year 36) have been registered under these provisions, 19 being employers' and 28 being workers' unions. In 27 cases (employers 13 and workers 14) such unions cover the whole Dominion (last year 24), the following being the industries concerned:—

Employers.—Farming (dairy, sheep, agricultural, and other), fruit-growing, commercial gardening, flour-milling, frozen-products manufacturers, motor-trade, and timber trade. In addition, several groups of local authorities—namely, Harbour Boards, County Councils, Electric-power Supply Authorities, and Rabbit Boards—have registered as New Zealand unions of employers.

Workers.—Clerical workers (insurance, banking, shipping, and freezing), dairy-factory workers, engine-drivers, gasworks employees, Harbour Boards' employees, merchant service officers, stonemasons, musicians, timber-workers, waterside workers, and the New Zealand Workers' Union covering farm and station hands, shearers, threshing-mill workers, forestry workers, road-construction workers, and a number of other classes of rural workers. In addition, there are a number of unions with a scope covering the greater part of New Zealand. These are the New Zealand (except Northern Industrial District) Amalgamated Engineering and Related Trades' Union; the New Zealand (except Westland) Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Related Trades' Union; The New Zealand (except Westland and Otago and Southland) Printing and Related Trades' Union; and the New Zealand (except Northern, Nelson, and Westland) Theatrical and Places of Amusement Employees' Union.

INDUSTRIAL DISTURBANCES DURING THE YEAR.

There were sixty-eight industrial disturbances during the year, as compared with sixty-three last year. Of these disturbances, 25 were in the coal-mining industry, 10 in the freezing industry, and 9 in the chemical manure industry.

The following is a summary of the larger disturbances:—

Four hundred coal-mine workers in the Nightcaps and Ohai districts ceased work as a result of the workers and owners being unable to agree upon the term of a new agreement between the parties. The workers desired the agreement to be for a term of two years, while the owners were agreeable only to a one-year term. The parties agreed to refer the point in dispute to the Court of Arbitration, and work was resumed after the loss of four working-days. At the hearing other matters were raised, and the Court found that, owing to its other fixtures, it would be unable to deal with the case. Finally it was agreed that the matters in dispute should be referred to a National Disputes Committee, and, at the request of both parties, the Judge of the Court consented to act as chairman. It may be mentioned that the workers involved in this dispute were not subject to an award of the Court, nor were they members of an industrial union registered under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.