

MEETINGS OF CONCILIATION BOARDS AND OF THE ARBITRATION COURT DURING THE YEAR
ENDING 31st MARCH, 1898.

APRIL, 1897.

Wellington.

Seamen's Dispute.—Since the decision of the Board on the 23rd February, in reference to the seamen's dispute, the shipowners refused to consent to the last two clauses, and decided to appeal to the Arbitration Court. The clauses referred to are—(1) That preference be given to members of the Seamen's Union; and (2) the provision that a representative of the union be permitted to visit members on board ship except during working-hours be allowed. The Arbitration Court met in May to settle the dispute.

Tailors' Dispute.—The matter in dispute was the non-acceptance by several tailors of the time statement of the union, which proposed an advance of from 10 to 12 per cent. on previous statement. The master tailors proposed to exclude from the log the items—(1) That union men have the pre-emptive right to employment; (2) that only one day's-wage man and one apprentice be employed in any shop; and (3) that the minimum weekly wage be £3.

The Board recommended—

(1.) That the proportion of apprentices be not more than one to four men, or fraction of the first four men, but no two apprentices are to be admitted in one year. The proportion to be gauged by full employment of journeymen for two-thirds of the year. (2.) (a.) One weekly man only to one apprentice. (b.) There shall be no distribution of labour commonly known as the "team system." (3.) The minimum wage for weekly men to be £2 15s. (4.) That employers shall employ members of the union in preference to non-members, provided that there are members of the union who are equally qualified with non-members to perform the particular work required to be done, and who are ready and willing to undertake it when non-members are employed.

That an industrial agreement be drawn out embodying the above recommendations, to last for two years at least, and which may be prolonged by consent of parties.

During October the Arbitration Court gave award with reference to the D.I.C. and Messrs. Kirkcaldie and Stains.

Christchurch.

Christchurch Builders' Association v. The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.—The dispute was that the association failed to comply with unions' requirements, which were that the following code of working-rules should be adopted:—

(1.) That the minimum rate of wages be 10s. per day. (2.) That forty-four hours constitute a week's work, divided as follows: August to April (inclusive), from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., one hour at dinner; May to July (inclusive), 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., half an hour at dinner; except on Saturdays, when the time worked shall be from 8 a.m. till 12 noon. (3.) That all time beyond eight hours on the first five days of the week and four hours on Saturday, also that the following holidays—viz., New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Queen's Birthday, Prince of Wales's Birthday, Anniversary Day, Labour Day, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day—be paid for at the rate of time and a half. (4.) That all men sent to a country job shall have their travelling-expenses and their time paid for going and returning, and an additional 10 per cent. to their wages where the distance necessitates lodgings. (5.) That men be conveyed to and from suburban jobs by employers. (6.) That members of trades-unions shall be employed in preference to non-unionists. (7.) That on all outside jobs employers shall provide a suitable place, properly secured, for the safety of men's tools; and also necessary sanitary conveniences.

The award of the Conciliation Board was as follows:—

(1.) That the minimum wage for a thoroughly competent tradesmen be 10s. per day. Men who are considered to be unable to earn the minimum wage shall be paid such lesser sum, if any, as a committee of the employers and workmen (which this Board suggests should be put up for the purpose of settling union disputes) shall agree upon. (2.) This rule to stand. (3.) At the end of this rule, for "time and a half" substitute "time and a quarter for the first four hours, and time and a half afterwards." (4.) After the word "shall," in the first line, add the words "be conveyed or." (5.) The suburban limit for men walking to their work shall be one mile from the Town Belt nearest the place at which the work is being carried on. Beyond that distance Rule 4 to apply. (6.) Employers shall employ members of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the Carpenters' and Joiners' Association, or members of any other properly constituted union of carpenters and joiners, in preference to non-members, provided that the members of the unions are equally qualified with non-members to perform the particular work required to be done, and are ready and willing to undertake it. When non-members are employed there shall be no distinction between members and non-members; both shall work together in harmony, and both shall work under the same conditions and receive equal pay for equal work. Any dispute under this rule, if it cannot be settled by the committee above referred to, shall be decided by the Board of Conciliation. (7.) This rule to stand.

The increase of wages provided for in Rules 1 and 3 to come into operation on Monday, the 24th May.

The Builders' Association and the union decided unanimously to adopt the award:

Bootmakers' Dispute, between Federated Bootmakers' Union and the Non-associated Employers.—The dispute as stated was,—

That on the 30th March, 1897, the employers refused to accept, work under, and abide by the Arbitration Court's award, made at Christchurch on the 3rd December, 1896, in the recent boot-trade dispute, respecting conditions of labour, general rules, and employment of apprentices, and pay the prices and extras for work done or to be done agreed upon by the New Zealand Manufacturers' Association of Employers and the New Zealand Federated Boot-trade Industrial Union of Workers. The parties having failed to satisfactorily adjust the dispute, application is hereby made to the Clerk of Awards for the Canterbury Industrial District that such dispute be referred to the Conciliation Board for settlement.

The Board recommended:—

That in the case of Maine Brothers the firm should take the award of the Court as the basis of settlement, but that any contracts entered into with the men should not be interfered with. With regard to Mr. Clayton's case, although there appeared to be some hardship in his conforming to the award the Court had laid down, the Board had decided to recommend that he should also comply with the conditions so far as they affected any lines provided for in the statement.

The employers agreed to the recommendation *re* Maine Brothers, but the union would not do so until Maine Brothers undertook to apprentice five boys who were not apprenticed previously.