

RETAIL HOURS FOR OIL-FUEL ESTABLISHMENTS.

The number of orders fixing closing-hours made to 31st March, 1942, is twenty-seven, the number actually in operation being twenty-four. Nineteen appeals for total or partial exemption were dealt with. One appeal was granted, and two were withdrawn following modification of conditions. There was one prosecution under the regulations, a penalty of £2 being imposed. Regulations have now been issued (Serial number 1942/181) providing for universal opening and closing hours for all retail oil-fuel establishments throughout the Dominion and revoking all orders previously made. The hours specified are 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and 7.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. On Sundays premises are to be closed all day. Machinery is provided whereby fuel may be obtained in case of urgent necessity.

ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY CLOSING-DAYS.

Except where the closing-day has been fixed by a poll of electors, the closing-day is appointed each year by resolution of the local authority or, in the absence of a decision by a local authority, by the Minister of Labour. Only two changes of day occurred in 1942, the counties of Amuri and Waipatu changing from Saturday to Wednesday and Thursday respectively.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

Awards of the Court of Arbitration 100 (last year 165).

The awards and industrial agreements actually in force on the 31st March, 1942, total 524 (last year 528).

The Court also issued 5 apprenticeship orders and 119 miscellaneous documents (interpretations, enforcements, &c.)

The Court of Arbitration has issued three awards recently in which there is awarded to all workers employed under them payment for the statutory holidays allowed by the Factories Act, 1921-22: see New Zealand (except Westland) Plumbers and Gasfitters' award (41 Book of Awards 1377), New Zealand Builders' Labourers, Quarry-workers, Tunnellers, and General Labourers' award (1941 Book of Awards 1823), and New Zealand Carpenters and Joiners' award, dated 23rd April, 1942. In the memorandum to the award first mentioned it is pointed out that hitherto a substantial number of plumbers (being those employed within factories) have received payment. The Court therefore considered it just and equitable that all workers under the award should receive the same treatment in this regard. On a previous occasion—viz., in the New Zealand (except Westland) Stonemasons' award (1938 Book of Awards 2511)—provision was made on similar grounds for all workers under the award.

WORK PERFORMED BY COMMISSIONERS AND COUNCILS OF CONCILIATION.

Industrial agreements made under the Act	34 (last year 22)
Disputes where recommendations were substantially accepted or agreements reached and referred to the Court to make awards	84 (last year 95)
Disputes where partial settlement was arrived at and referred to the Court to make awards	35 (last year 53)
Disputes withdrawn during or after hearing	2

MINIMUM WAGE-RATES AS AT 31ST MAY, 1942, FIXED BY AWARDS AND AGREEMENTS IN A NUMBER OF THE PRINCIPAL INDUSTRIES.

A pronouncement of the Court of Arbitration contained in 1937 Book of Awards 1648 contained standard minima for casual labour as: Skilled, 2s. 9d. per hour; semi-skilled, 2s. 5d. to 2s. 7½d. per hour; unskilled, 2s. 4d. per hour. These rates have with variation been written into awards issued subsequently. By the Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940 (Serial number 1940/86) the Court is authorized by general order to amend the provisions of all awards and industrial agreements for the time being in force in so far as such provisions affect the rates of remuneration of workers. In making a general order the Court shall take into account (a) the economic and financial conditions affecting trade and industry in New Zealand; (b) the cost of living; (c) any rise or fall in the cost of living since the date when any previous order under these regulations was made; and (d) all other considerations which the Court deems relevant. Following an application in that behalf to the Court an increase of 5 per cent. upon the rates fixed by awards, agreements, and apprenticeship orders was granted by order dated 12th August, 1940 (1940 Book of Awards 1153).

The Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940, Amendment No. 3 (Serial number 1942/28), authorizes the Court to exclude from the scope of any order such portion of the remuneration in each week of the workers affected by the order as exceeds an amount determined by the Court. It further prescribes that where any such exclusion is made any increase or reduction provided for by the order in the rates of remuneration shall apply to the unexcluded portion of each worker's earnings irrespective of his total weekly remuneration, the term remuneration being defined for the purposes of this amendment as actual earnings, including time and piece wages and overtime and any other special payments.

An order of the Court dated 7th April, 1942, increased rates of remuneration then in force by 5 per cent. and excluded from the scope of the order such portion of the remuneration in each week of the workers affected as exceeds the amount of £5 in the case of adult male workers, the amount of £2 10s. in the case of adult female workers, and the amount of £1 10s. in the case of junior workers and apprentices, and applied the increase to the unexcluded portion of the remuneration of each worker.

In the following table where there is no Dominion award or agreement in operation Wellington rates have been taken. All the wage-rates shown below, except those indicated by an asterisk (*), are subject to an increase of 5 per cent. as from 12th August, 1940, in accordance with the general