

As mentioned in previous reports, the Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940 (Serial number 1940/86) authorized the Court of Arbitration, on the application of any industrial union or association of employers or workers, 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. When the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations 1942 (Serial number 1942/335) came into operation a requirement that in making a general order the Court 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since the date when any previous order was made, and (d) all other considerations which the Court deems relevant was withdrawn, and in lieu thereof it was provided that the Court issue an order whenever an increase or reduction of not less than 5 per cent. (2½ per cent. increase for first order) occurred in the general level of prices included in the wartime price index. Variation of this was effected by the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations 1942, Amendment No. 6 (Serial number 1945/75), and in substitution for the arrangement as to automatic issue of orders there is again a requirement that the Court take into account (a) the economic and financial conditions affecting trade and industry in New Zealand, (b) any rise or fall in the cost of living as indicated by the wartime price index since the 15th day of December, 1942, (c) any increase or reduction in rates of remuneration since the 15th day of December, 1942, and (d) all other considerations that the Court deems relevant. The wartime price index is of the prices of such commodities and services, including rents, as the Minister of Industries and Commerce directs, the basic level of prices to be that indicated by the index as at 15th December, 1942.

Index figures as follows have been published: 15th December 1942, 1000; 15th March, 1943, 1011; 15th June, 1943, 1000; 15th September, 1943, 996; 15th December, 1943, 1001; 15th March, 1944, 1005; 15th June, 1944, 1001; 15th September, 1944, 1003; 15th December, 1944, 1004; 15th March, 1945, 1006; 15th June, 1945, 1005; 15th September, 1945, 1001; 15th December, 1945, 1003; 15th March, 1946, 1009.

INSPECTION, ETC.

During the year, 4,447 complaints of alleged breaches of the Act and of awards and industrial agreements, &c., were received, but it was found on investigation that in 1,167 cases no breach had been committed. In 137 cases proceedings were taken, and in 2,107 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 2 prosecutions were taken, and warnings were given in 1,069 other cases. Of the 139 prosecutions, 119 were against employers and 20 against workers; 79 convictions were recorded, 66 against employers and 13 against workers. Total penalties, £173 1s.

REGISTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIONS

The usual statutory return (to 31st December, 1945) giving a list of associations and unions on the register at that date, together with the membership thereof, is appended hereto.

Employers' associations number 23, the same as last year, with a total membership of 150, compared with 154 last year.

Employers' unions number 272, 1 more than last year, with a total membership of 16,903, compared with 15,854 last year.