

that whatever increases are eventually granted will, as a general rule, apply as from the date fixed for the first hearing in Conciliation Council. There is still, of course, a wide discretion left with the Court, and the Court may fix such other date as it thinks fit, having regard to any undue delay that may have been caused by any party to the dispute between the date of the filing of the application for the hearing of the dispute with the Clerk of Awards and the date of making of the award. It is felt that the provisions of the section will facilitate early settlement of industrial disputes.

(3) *Section 22.*—This section extends the time within which action may be commenced for recovery of arrears of wages payable under an award or industrial agreement from twelve months to two years. Section 146 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act previously restricted the workers' normal rights of recovery to twelve months. The amendment, while still restricting the worker's rights to recover wages otherwise lawfully due, extends the restricted period to two years. The Department has had instances where workers have been precluded from recovering arrears of wages otherwise legally payable because of the effect of the twelve months' restriction. This is due very often to the delay in getting an authoritative opinion from the appropriate Court, and while on occasions employers have been prepared to agree to waive their right to plead the twelve months' limitation, other employers have refused to do so, and the workers have thereby been precluded from recovering wages which they would otherwise be lawfully entitled to receive.

(4) *Section 23.*—This section enables a society of employers to be registered as a New Zealand union or a North or South Island union if all employers concerned belong to the society. Previously an employers' organization could not be so registered unless there were at least three employers engaged in the industry in each of the industrial districts which the union was intended to cover. One employers' organization covering all the undertakings of the kind concerned in New Zealand desired to register as a New Zealand union to enable it to take advantage of the procedure of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, but had insufficient members in number to enable it to do so under the existing legislation. The section concerned removes the disability.

(5) *Section 24.*—This section amends section 2 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act, 1943, and enables an industrial union of workers to commence proceedings for a penalty for a breach of the Act in cases of alleged discrimination or victimization against workers because of their union activities. Previously such action had to be taken by an Inspector of Awards, but cases may arise where the Department for special reasons declines to take action, and the amendment will now permit the union itself to take action if it so desires.

SECTION 5—APPRENTICESHIP

(a) *Administrative Developments*

(1) Opportunity was taken during 1948 to consolidate the legislation relating to apprentices. The original *Apprentices Act* of 1923, and amendments to it of 1925, 1927, 1930, and 1946 were thus all brought together into the *Apprentices Act*, 1948. The main principles of the existing legislation were left untouched, but opportunity was taken to make a few minor machinery changes designed to make for smoother administration. Part I of the *Master and Apprentice Act*, 1908 (a reprint in effect of an Act of 1865), was at the same time repealed because it was completely out of keeping with present conditions.

(2) During the period covered by this report an additional District Commissioner of Apprenticeship was appointed to work in the Taranaki, Wanganui, and Palmerston North Districts, which initially were within the jurisdiction of the District Commissioner, Wellington.