

employment; while during the slack season, extending from May until September, some difficulty may be experienced in getting into immediate work. Tradesmen and farm and general labourers are the class of men that are in most demand, whilst clerks and men fitted only for light employment are at a discount, and should not come here unless prepared to stand the risk of being out of employment for a time, or of being forced (as in the case of clerks) to tackle hard manual labour.

*Re the Factories and Shops Acts:* In Wellington there were only 4 cases under the Factories Act brought before the Court, and 2 under the Shops and Shop-assistants Act. For the colony there were 59 cases under the Factories Act, 38 under the Shops and Shop-assistants Act, and 5 under the Servants' Registry Offices Act.

*Labour Journal:* This publication has, as usual, been compiled and issued monthly to twelve hundred persons in all parts of the world, and has elicited great praise from its subscribers.

*Books of Awards, &c.:* Vol. iv. of this publication was also issued. It has been inquired for and sent to the principal European countries, the United States of America, and Japan, while in the Commonwealth it is in great demand. By far the largest sales are made to secretaries of industrial unions in the colony, who find the book invaluable for reference. Vol. ii. of "Cases under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act" was also compiled and published.

*Annual Report:* The compilation of this, from the great mass of figures which has to be dealt with, occupies a great deal of time. It deals with the following subjects:—

- (a.) Reports from local Inspectors.
- (b.) Returns of cases dealt with by the Arbitration Court and Conciliation Boards.
- (c.) Statistics relating to unemployed assisted.
- (d.) Returns of accidents in factories and report on same.
- (e.) Legal decisions under the various Acts administered by the Department.
- (f.) Returns of permits to young persons, and of overtime worked.
- (g.) Reports on accommodation required for shearers.
- (h.) Statistics relating to factories.

Schedules have been collected from every factory in the colony showing the number of hands employed, ages, rates of wages paid, description of buildings, and accommodation provided for employees. And here let me say that the accommodation and sanitary conveniences provided are on the whole first class, and leave nothing to be desired—a great advance on the condition of affairs existing ten years ago.

*Shearers' Accommodation Act:* Strict inspection has been made of the accommodation provided for shearers, and great improvements have been effected. The accommodation provided for general farm-labourers has also been greatly improved.

*Breaches of awards:* Since the passing of the Amendment Act of 1903 a great deal of extra work has been thrown on Inspectors of Factories in detecting and investigating breaches of the various awards of the Arbitration Court. Not the least important part of the work in connection with this Act is the number of personal interviews between the Inspectors, employers, secretaries and members of unions, and these interviews in many cases save endless trouble and annoyance owing to the advice and assistance given in settling minor disputes, and giving clear interpretations on points in question. The investigation of breaches of awards is often intricate and laborious, and Inspectors are to be congratulated on the able and impartial manner in which they have performed these duties. Under the Amendment Act of 1903 power was also given for Inspectors of Mines to act as Inspectors of Awards. These gentlemen are now acting in the latter capacity, and are doing good work. Their duties exclusively relate to the awards affecting mining, and their practical knowledge of the industry has been of great service to the Department. The following is a summary of cases brought before the Court by Inspectors: Auckland, 2; Wellington, 59; Christchurch, 21; Dunedin, 17; Nelson, 5; Reefton, 6.

*Registration of unions:* Under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 72 unions have been registered during the year, showing a total of 3,558 members—viz., 43 unions of workers, with 2,822 members, and 29 unions of employers, with 736 members. The total number of unions on the register is now 372, totalling 30,720 members, divided as follows: Workers, 266, with 27,640 members; employers, 106, with 3,080 members. During the year 29 partial and 21 complete amendments to rules have been revised and registered.

Generally speaking, the year just gone has been a good one from an industrial point of view. The cry of the unemployed has not been heard, and, judging from appearances, will not be whilst the present prosperity continues. Owing to the large increase of office-work I have not been able to visit our Inspectors and agents as much as I should have liked, but with a slight rearrangement of the work I hope to be able to do a little more visiting this coming year.

I have to thank the Head Office staff for the very cheerful way in which every call has been answered, and for the general all-round excellence of the clerical work. The Inspectors in the various cities and towns of the colony deserve a meed of praise; their work has been performed in an excellent manner, and it is largely due to their tact and discretion that so little friction exists between the Department and the representatives of the many conflicting interests we have to deal with.

I have, &c.,

J. MACKAY,

Chief Clerk and Deputy Chief Inspector.

Edward Tregear, Esq., Secretary for Labour.