

agreement formerly made which provides for "eight hours at the face in each shift." The men were offered (it is alleged) "one penny per month" for overtime, and on their refusal the mine was practically shut down, only twelve workers being kept on instead of about a hundred. The case is a critical one, and is looked forward to with interest by all miners.

On the 4th April, 1906, an important judgment was issued by the Chief Justice, Sir Robert Stout, in the Supreme Court. It related to the payment of a youth who had commenced work as a printer at a very low wage. Four years afterwards an award fixing a minimum wage in the trade was made. Although the youth received several advances as time went on, he was never paid up to the minimum wage mentioned in the award. The employer was summoned to the Arbitration Court by the Labour Department, and fined £10, but no provision was made for the payment of back wages. The Chief Justice ruled that the back wages (the difference between the sums received and the award's minimum wage) could be recovered. Judgment for £51 16s. was given, with costs, in Magistrate's Court and Supreme Court. (*Labour Journal*, 1906, p. 462.)

The expenses incurred under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act during the year were as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Conciliation Boards	388	0	0
Arbitration Court	3,214	0	0
Sundries	1	0	0
	£3,603	0	0

The total number of industrial unions registered on the 31st December, 1905, was as follows: Employers' unions, 113; members, 3,276. Workers' unions, 261; members, 29,869. Full particulars are given in a separate report laid before Parliament and headed "Return showing the Number of Members in each Industrial Union."

The amount of back wages obtained during the year for workers by Inspectors of Awards without recourse to Court proceedings was £1,153 19s. 1d. Last year the amount similarly obtained was £1,463 8s. 4d. This money is accepted by the Inspector only when he is satisfied that default has been made unintentionally, and through want of knowledge. This money for back wages is, of course, in addition to the £788 10s. 11d. collected as back wages and handed to workers under the Factories Act, and £34 5s. 6d. similarly collected under the Shops and Offices Act.

Of 263 cases presented by Inspectors of Awards before the Arbitration Court for enforcement during the year, 213 were successful, nineteen were withdrawn, and thirty-one dismissed.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR ACCIDENTS ACT.

Nineteen cases under this Act were heard before the Arbitration Court. Several others were settled out of Court. The Auckland case of McKenna v. Walsh and Whakane te Matepaere was interesting on account of one of the respondents being a Maori. The claim was for the death of a son killed in bushfelling. The case was adjourned for sufficient time to give the said respondent fourteen clear days' notice, so as to insure that he understood the nature of the claim. The sum of £80, with costs £10 10s., was allowed to the mother (claimant), and Walsh was indemnified against this liability. ("Decisions," p. 3.)

The father and mother of a newspaper runner residing in Auckland were awarded £40, with £14 3s. 6d. funeral expenses and £5 5s. costs, for the death of their son, aged fourteen years. ("Decisions," p. 4.)

In Wellington, a man who had lost his thumb while repairing a fence received £95 and £7 7s. costs. ("Decisions," p. 6.)

In Canterbury, the father, mother, and sisters of a labourer killed by accident while at work were adjudged £250, with £19 13s. medical and funeral expenses and £7 7s. costs. Of the lump sum, £50 was given to the parents and £200 invested with the Public Trustee for the dependants. ("Decisions," p. 8.)

In the case of Davis v. Helmkey, of Otago, the defence set up was that of "serious and wilful misconduct" on the part of the claimant, who was a carpenter engaged at work on the outside of the upper story of a house. The usual weekly payment of half-wages was allowed, with £12 12s. costs. ("Decisions," p. 11.)

The plea of "serious and wilful misconduct" was a successful defence in the suit of Power v. Thomson, at Milton. The claimant, a flax-mill hand, after the signal to cease work had been made, tried to remove some flax that had become fastened round a drum; his hand was caught in the stripper and crushed. Costs, £7 7s., were allowed against claimant's father. ("Decisions," p. 23.)

The defence plea of "serious and wilful misconduct" was upheld by the Court in the case of T. Crowe v. the New Zealand Coal and Oil Company, Dunedin. Costs and witnesses' expenses were given against claimant. ("Decisions," p. 43.)