

by men of the Auckland Electric Tramway Company. There had for some time been dissatisfaction among the motormen in regard to teaching learners, but the dismissal of two conductors who were believed to have been discharged summarily for offences not committed (or not inquired into) brought the trouble to a point. The men refused to work unless the conductors were reinstated, and a strike was instituted. It commenced in the afternoon and was over before midnight. The company has since been fined by the Arbitration Court for dismissing men without notice, and the men were fined for taking part in a strike. (The judgments were delivered since the period covered by this report, and have not yet been officially published.) The President of the Court said that "the strike was short-lived, and seems to have taken place without premeditation or organization of any kind."

The other strike, or series of strikes, was of a more serious character. On the 12th February 121 slaughtermen employed at the works of the Gear Meat Company and the Wellington Meat-export Company went out on strike for an increased rate of pay. They had been working under an industrial agreement which had expired, but the provisions of which still remained in force until a new agreement or award should be made. Negotiations took place, and advances in prices were proffered by the employers, but were not accepted, as not being sufficient. Application to the Arbitration Court was made by the Inspector of Awards to enforce the Act against the men for aiding or abetting a strike. The Court heard the case, but decided that through a flaw in the original industrial agreement it had never been legally an agreement, and therefore the application was dismissed. The strikers finally resumed work at the establishments near Wellington. In the meantime, however, the strike had spread to other places, and the meat-export industry was paralysed at Christchurch, Pareora, Gisborne, &c. The Arbitration Court proceeded from place to place and heard the applications for enforcement of awards. The plea which had succeeded in Wellington—viz., informality of the agreement—was of no avail in other places where awards were in force. The men were fined individually £5 each for having aided and abetted a strike. Some have paid the fine in full; some are paying by instalments to the Labour Department. The whole affair is greatly to be regretted. It has, however, brought to the front the great importance of the question whether the Arbitration Court could punish men by imprisonment if the fines inflicted on them by the Court are left unpaid and even laughed at. Fortunately, however, the session of Parliament is near at hand, and the very debatable position will probably be discussed and settled by the Legislature.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

Under the Shearers' Accommodation Act 730 shearing-sheds have been inspected during the year. The duty falling on Inspectors under this Act is in many cases an arduous one, as many of the sheep runs and farms are in the broken back country of the colony. The accommodation generally was good; 22 sheds ordered last year to be improved have now been passed as satisfactory, while in 44 cases still more improvement has been insisted on by Inspectors.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Twenty-four cases were taken before the Court under this Act. They present no case of special interest except that of *Tarabochia v. Howden*, in which a lump sum was given by the Chief Justice (in the Supreme Court) in lieu of weekly allowance for accident. ("Decisions under 'The Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act, 1906,'" Vol. v, page 21.)

Alterations to this Act have been embodied in an amending Bill.

OTHER ACTS, ETC.

The Servants' Registry Offices Act has been well observed. There have been only two prosecutions under this Act—one being for the office-keeper accepting a watch and chain in payment of fees (see "Legal Decisions," published in this report). The defendant was fined £5 and costs; his license was also indorsed.

Under the Scaffolding Inspection Act Inspectors have been appointed in the four chief cities, and have been diligently carrying out their duties. The appointments will be of great service in guarding life and limb from injury in building operations, and the Act is one which meets with much approval from the workers. The detailed reports of Inspectors of Scaffolding form part of this report.

The Master and Apprentice Act was invoked in the case of an apprentice at Auckland who was sixteen years old when he was apprenticed for four years. The Resident Magistrate gave judgment that by this Act apprenticeship must expire when apprentice arrives at the age of nineteen. (See "Legal Decisions," May, 1906.)