

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

During the year there have been 2 cases of strikes taken under the Act. In the first case, 7 shearers employed by a sheepowner in the Otago District struck for a higher rate of pay. The award provided for the payment of 18s. per hundred, and the men concerned demanded £1. The strikers were cited, and fined £5 each, and costs. The men were idle for fourteen days, and the approximate loss to both employers and men was £31. The shearers did not resume work with the employer, but their places were filled within five days by other workmen. The main loss to the employer was occasioned by the sheep having to be driven out and remustered.

The second case occurred in Auckland, where 27 men ceased work owing to dissatisfaction at the rate of pay received by assistant-slaughtermen. The Department is proceeding against 21 of the men concerned for a breach of section 5 of the Act. Six of the men concerned cannot be found, but proceedings will be taken against them when traced.

Another case under the Wellington Shearers' award was taken against a Dannevirke sheepowner for a lockout. The men refused to shear, alleging that the sheep were wet, and in consequence the employer dismissed them. Action was taken by the Department under section 4 of the Amendment Act for a lockout. The case was dismissed by the Magistrate, who held that on the evidence the sheep were dry, and he must dismiss the case. Costs were awarded against the Department.

Several other minor disputes occurred, which were either outside the scope of the Act or were trivial.

The work in connection with the registration of industrial unions continues to be fairly regular. During the year ending 31st March last 24 workers' unions, with 565 members, and 7 employers' unions, with 164 members, were registered, whilst 2 workers' unions and 1 employers' union cancelled registration. Two associations of workers and 1 of employers were also registered during the period. Twenty-two unions had the whole of their rules revised and registered as complete amendments; and 51 had partial amendments to their rules revised and accepted. Sixteen employers and 17 workers' unions have been cancelled for failure to send in annual returns under section 21.

On the 31st December last there were 120 unions of employers registered, with 3,702 members, as against 113, with a membership of 3,276, for the year 1905. The number of workers' unions registered in 1905 was 261, with 29,869 members, as against 308, with a membership of 54,519, for the 1909 period. The membership of employer's unions shows a slight decrease over the previous year (216), but the membership of workers' unions shows a comparatively large increase—5,172 members. There has been a decrease in the number of unions (workers)—308, as against 325 in the previous year, but this is mainly accounted for by the fact that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants is now registered as one body instead of 26 as formerly. The outside unions are now simply regarded as branch offices. Full particulars of the membership of the various unions are shown in the report laid on the table of the House under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

For the five years 1906–10 awards have been made by the Arbitration Court, as follows :—

Year.	Number.	Year.	Number.
1906 ..	52	1909 ..	88
1907 ..	59	1910 ..	89
1908 ..	98		

a total of 386 for the period.

Cases taken by the Department for enforcement of awards in the Arbitration Court total 35, as against 552 last year. The majority of the cases are now taken in accordance with the Amendment Act passed in 1908, before the Magistrate's Court, a total of 536 cases being dealt with in that Court. The total number of cases taken by the Department in both Courts is 571, of which 477 were won, 89 dismissed, and 5 withdrawn. In the Arbitration Court cases the Department was successful in 21 instances, whilst 14 were dismissed. In the Magistrate's Court 456 cases were won, 75 dismissed, and 5 withdrawn. The fines awarded to the Department in the Arbitration Court amounted to £27; in the Magistrate's Court, £698 10s. 6d. The fines in the cases taken by unions amounted to £41 12s. in the Magistrate's Court, and £5 10s. in cases conducted before the Arbitration Court. The following is a table showing in detail the cases taken under the Act during the period :—

Arbitration Court.

District.	Won.	Dismissed.	Withdrawn.	Total.
<i>Cases taken by Department for Enforcements of Awards, &c.</i>				
Northern	14	11	..	25
Wellington	4	3	..	7
Otago and Southland	3	..	..	3
Total cases taken by Department	21	14	..	35