

returns for Wellington District are due to the fact that there are more towns of considerable size included in the district, such as Palmerston, Napier, Wanganui, and Masterton.

The number of employers actually working in their shops is 15,782, as against 13,481 last year, or an increase of 2,301 over last year's figures. Summarized, the position is that there were in the Dominion 14,844 shops, in which were engaged 38,387 hands, and paying £1,972.395 in wages.

Prosecutions.

Two hundred cases were taken, as against 186 during the previous year; in all, 186 convictions were obtained, and 14 cases were dismissed. The principal breaches were as follow :—

Nature of Breach.	Number of Cases taken.
Failing to close in terms of requisitions by which the hours are fixed by a majority of the shopkeepers concerned	77
Failing to close on statutory half-holiday	65
Failing to grant the weekly half-holiday to assistants	29
Failing to pay wages fortnightly	3
Employing assistants after prescribed hours	13
Employing assistants more than the prescribed number of hours	4
Employing assistants overtime without permit	7
For failing to keep holiday-book	1
Failing to pay overtime to assistants	1

The 14 cases dismissed are summarized as follow : Two were for failing to give a half-holiday to assistants; one, against a Chinese, was dismissed because the evidence showed he was not an employee; and in the other case proceedings had not been taken within one month after committal of the offence. A cycle and phonograph dealer was proceeded against for failing to close in accordance with a requisition from cycle-dealers, but the case was dismissed on the ground that he was principally a phonograph-dealer and not a cycle-dealer. Four of the dismissed cases were for employing assistants after prescribed hours; the first was dismissed on the ground that half an hour's grace was allowed shopkeepers by section 37; the second that if the employee had hurried he would not have been late; the third and fourth, as the evidence was conflicting. A case against a refreshment-room keeper for failing to pay wages fortnightly was dismissed, owing to conflicting evidence. The remaining 7 cases dismissed were for failing to close on the statutory half-holiday, 2 on the ground of insufficient evidence, and the other 5 because of some confusion which existed as to the whether Empire Day or the 3rd of June was to be observed as the holiday in view of the King's Birthday. The shopkeepers concerned were in doubt as to their liability to close on the statutory half-holiday.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The year, industrially speaking, has been one of comparative peace, and there are only three cases to record of breaches of the "strike" and "lockout" provisions of the Act.

The following is a summary of the cases dealt with, including one of an alleged "lockout" :—

Eighteen men were proceeded against by the Department in connection with the strike of butchers at Southdown, Auckland (where 27 men ceased work), owing to dissatisfaction with the rate of pay received by assistant slaughtermen. Nine of the men concerned were not summoned, as they could not be found. The strikers prosecuted were fined £2 each and costs. The strike lasted seventeen days.

Fifty workers engaged in discharging a cargo of cement at Wellington ceased work on account of the use of hooks being prohibited in handling the cargo. They were proceeded against for a breach of the strike provisions of the Act. A nonsuit was entered against the Department, on the ground that it had not been proved that a strike within the meaning of the Act took place, inasmuch as the evidence did not disclose that the men ceased work in pursuance of an agreement or common understanding between them, and with the intention of compelling or inducing the company to agree to the use of hooks or to put on extra men. Fresh proceedings were not commenced owing to insufficient evidence. This strike lasted one day.

Another case (for lockout) under the Hawke's Bay Fishermen's Industrial agreement was taken against a Napier trawling company for a lockout (section 4 of the Amendment Act, 1908). A trawler had been running at a loss, and the owners asked for a conference with the crew in reference to a proposed charter and partnership scheme. Ostensibly to allow of this conference being held, the