

1911. This should prove very useful for reference. An addition was made to the index this year in the direction of indicating the latest award in force in each industry in the respective localities. Supplementary digests of the decisions under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and Workers' Compensation Act for the year were compiled by Mr. W. A. Sim, late Associate to the Judge of the Arbitration Court.

Volume x of cases under the Workers' Compensation Act was also issued. It contains all the decisions of the Court of Arbitration for the year ending 31st December, 1911, with a complete index (Vols. i-x).

INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS.

The alteration in the method of collecting statistical data concerning the number of hands employed, wages paid, &c., in the various factories in New Zealand, as decided upon by the Department last year, will enable us to furnish for general information much more reliable figures on the subject than has been the case in the past. The statistics will be attached to this report in a separate appendix and will cover the work done in the various factories throughout the whole of the year ending 31st March, 1911. While information gathered by the Department in previous years has no doubt been valuable as showing the number of hands employed, wages paid, &c., as at the 1st April of each year, still such information cannot be regarded as satisfactory inasmuch as many factories are, of course, slack on the 1st April while some may be abnormally busy. It is only by covering the whole year's work that satisfactory data can be obtained. As this procedure involves a very much larger amount of work than under the former system, it has, as was stated last year, been decided that this information should be collected once in five years only, the information to be gathered in the intervening four years to be very much simplified. A very valuable item of information that will appear in the appendix referred to will be that showing the duration of employment in the various trades. In the event of the question of unemployment being dealt with in the near future by way of unemployment insurance or otherwise, this information will undoubtedly prove most useful.

In regard to the future collection of the information required for the above statistics: it is proposed to divide the various factories into five trade groups, taking one group in each of the five years, so that the work of five years may be as far as possible equally distributed from year to year, and this course will also enable the Department to specialize on the particular groups taken in hand each year. It is also hoped to reduce the amount of work that has been given to employers in supplying returns to the Department by so arranging their wage-books (already required under the Factories and other Acts) as to enable the Department to collect the information required direct from the books.

Another question that has been engaging the attention of the Department for some years has been that of making a comparison between the rates provided for in the various awards and the actual rates paid by manufacturers to their workers. Some tables have in previous years been compiled by the Department and published, but considerable difficulty has been experienced in making the information reliable on account of the fact that the exact work performed by the different workers and the time taken in earning the wages paid are not always clearly shown on the returns. It was hoped to be able to obtain sufficiently definite information on these lines from the wages-sheets collected last year, from which the first of the five-yearly statistics are being published, but it has been found that the information available is also not sufficient to enable us to make a reliable comparison. It is therefore proposed by the Department, as opportunity occurs, to make inquiries from time to time in groups of trades, as the Inspectors of Awards are carrying out their ordinary inspection duties, when, in the course of their examination of the wages-books, they will take notes as to the cases in which the rates actually paid to the workers exceed those provided for by the awards. It has been found that in order to obtain satisfactory information it is necessary to make a separate examination in respect of each worker instead of dealing with them in groups. By following this course the Department will be able to obtain exactly the information that is required, and which, as outlined above, has been found wanting in the returns supplied.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT BRANCHES.

The number of persons assisted this year totals 2,215, a slight decrease on the figures of the previous year. A schedule at the end of this report gives details concerning the number sent to work by each office. In the four centres the following are the totals for the period: Wellington, 636; Auckland, 626; Christchurch, 548; and Dunedin, 283. The reports from the officers in charge all emphasize the fact that the difficulty of securing women workers grows more acute with