

obvious error in the section, which should be rectified. One against an undertaker, who sold wreaths and other funeral furnishings, for not closing on the statutory half-holiday, was dismissed, the S.M. not being satisfied that the defendant was a "shopkeeper" as defined by the Act.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

The past year has been the most notable for serious industrial unrest in the history of the Dominion, no fewer than thirty-five strikes having occurred. Happily the major portion were of a minor nature, but three disputes were of some magnitude—namely, those affecting the Waihi Gold-miners, the Reefton Gold-miners, and the slaughtermen throughout the Dominion. The first-mentioned was one of the most serious industrial disturbances in the history of New Zealand, and was remarkable for the fact that the dispute lay not between employers and their workers, but between two bodies of workers—i.e., those in favour of the Act and those opposed to its principles. The most regrettable feature to record was that there was much rioting and disorder, which, unhappily, ended in the fatal shooting of one of the participants.

The Reefton dispute may be considered as second to the Waihi trouble in point of magnitude, the industry affected being at a standstill for a period of six months.

The slaughtermen's strike, which was one sympathetic dispute, spread practically throughout the Dominion, took place when the season was at its height, and consequently must have resulted in serious loss and inconvenience to the freezing companies and to the farmers.

The following are details of the circumstances of each dispute:—

Waihi Gold-miners (from 13th May to 20th November, 1912).—The majority of the miners and other workers employed at the mines were members of the New Zealand Federation of Labour, which was opposed to registration under the Act. The engine-drivers, winders, &c., employed at the mines seceded from the Miners' Union and formed a separate union, which it registered under the Act, and the miners belonging to the Federation of Labour refused to work with them. The mines were accordingly closed down, and a total of about two thousand men was thrown out of employment. The actual number of strikers was about seven hundred. Up to the year 1911 the Waihi Miners' Union, to which all the employees in the mines belonged, was registered under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, but it then cancelled its registration and joined the New Zealand Federation of Labour. The award under which the union had been working ceased to exist on the cancellation being completed, as its currency had expired. The engine-drivers, wishing to continue to work under the Act, registered their union in order to enter into an "industrial agreement" as to conditions of employment with the employers. The estimated loss in wages to the workers concerned in the strike was about £180,000. The strike lasted for six months, when the Federation of Labour declared it "off," as it had practically collapsed. Sufficient men were by that time available to enable the companies to effect a resumption of work, and the mines were accordingly reopened. The strikers' places were gradually filled by other men, and the employees are at present working under "industrial agreements," having formed unions and registered them under the Act. Matters now appear to have recovered something near their normal level. The strike was not illegal within the meaning of the Act, as there was no award or industrial agreement in force affecting the strikers, and therefore no action was taken.

Inangahua Gold-miners (from 18th May to 16th November, 1912).—In this case the trouble arose over the company's decision to work the newly introduced Waugh drill machines (commonly known as "poppers") single-handed instead of continuing to employ two men on each popper, although it is understood that the question of working under the contract system was also at stake. The men's union resolved that it would not accede to the company's determination, and when the men were asked to work the poppers single-handed they refused to do so and were paid off. Work was thus brought practically to a standstill, and as a consequence 519 men were rendered idle. The industrial agreement under which the men and the company were working specified that in the event of questions arising which were not provided for in the agreement a person to be appointed by the Arbitration Court Judge should act as arbitrator, but neither side apparently made any suggestion that the trouble should be thus settled. The deadlock continued, and after five weeks twenty-four blacksmiths and engine-drivers (who had not so far been affected by the dispute) ceased work, allegedly through intimidation of the union and the idle miners. After work had been at a standstill for nearly six months an agreement was arrived at between the parties and filed as an "industrial agreement," to come into force on the 16th November, 1912. It was agreed that where poppers were in operation the work should be performed by workmen in pairs; that the employers should have the right to require stoping