

*Personal Notes.*

It is with great regret that the death of Mr. J. R. Triggs (Conciliation Commissioner for Canterbury and Otago and Southland) has to be recorded. Mr. Triggs, who had occupied his position for nearly nine years, had by his courtesy and tact earned the confidence of both employers and employees. He has been succeeded by Mr. W. H. Hagger, who has transferred from Wellington to Christchurch to fill the vacancy; and the position held by Mr. Hagger has been filled by the appointment of Mr. W. Newton, formerly Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories.

*Registration of Industrial Unions and Associations.*

During the year twenty-two unions were registered—viz., workers' unions, 17; employers' unions, 5. Of these, twenty were newly organized bodies, and the remaining registrations were due merely to alterations in constitution.

The usual statutory return (to the 31st December, 1917) of the unions registered under the Act, with their membership at that date, is published herewith as Appendix H.—11A, p. 9.

The total number of unions of employers has increased by four, with a membership decrease of 164; while the number of unions of workers has increased by four, and the total membership of same increased by 1,485, notwithstanding the enlistment or calling-up of a large number of members for military service.

The work of this branch of the Department has shown little falling-off since the war began, a large number of amendments of rules, many involving a complete revision of all the rules, being submitted for registration.

*Decisions of Court of Arbitration of Interest given during the Year.*

In interpreting the Dunedin Electrical Workers' award the Court stated that the Master and Apprentice Act, 1908, applied to apprenticeships only in cases where there is an indenture in writing in pursuance of the provisions of that Act. Apprenticeships entered into under and in pursuance of an award of the Arbitration Court are not controlled or affected in any way by the provisions of the Act before mentioned. Such apprenticeships are therefore not subject to the limitation in regard to the age at which apprenticeships must cease—viz., nineteen years—as mentioned in section 7 of the before-mentioned Act. (Book of Awards, vol. xviii, p. 356.)

An important ruling was given in answer to an application for the interpretation of the Otago Carpenters and Joiners' award, when the Court stated that certain workers, being already provided for by another—an earlier—award, could not, while that award remained in operation, be brought under the provisions of the Carpenters and Joiners' award. (Book of Awards, vol. xviii, p. 735.)

Replying to an application for the interpretation of the Wellington Hairdressers' award, as to whether certain employers who let or leased their saloons to other persons for the purpose of hairdressing could be classed, for the purposes of the award, as employers, and the lessees as employees, the Court held that clause 11 of the award—which is as follows: "Where a person who carries on the business of a hairdresser or tobacconist lets any chair or part of his shop for the purpose of hairdressing to any other person, such last-mentioned person shall for the purposes of this award be deemed to be a worker, and such first-mentioned person shall be deemed to be an employer"—went beyond the jurisdiction of the Court, which could only deal with questions arising between "employers"—that is, persons, firms, or companies employing workers—and "workers"—that is, workers employed by employers bound by an award. (Book of Awards, vol. xviii, p. 1390.)

In consequence of a dispute in respect of certain work being done on board one of the Union Steamship Company's steamers the union instructed all engineers to refuse to work overtime in any shop in Otago until further notice. The Court, in a memorandum to the undermentioned award, considered that the union's action was wholly unjustifiable and unreasonable, resulting in both loss and inconvenience to employers. The Court therefore decided to mark its disapproval of such action by refusing to continue the preference of employment which the members of the union had hitherto enjoyed. (Otago and Southland Engineers' award; Book of Awards, vol. xviii, p. 1180.)

With a view to encouraging apprentices to attend technical colleges and qualify for proficiency certificates in regard to the particular trades in which they are engaged, the Court has made provision in several awards for the payment of increased wages to apprentices so qualifying. In most of the carpenters' awards filed during the year the Court has also imposed on apprentices the duty of attending technical colleges where such are reasonably accessible. The Court has also directed that attendance fees shall be refunded to an apprentice by his employer in each term in which his attendance is not less than 70 per cent. of the maximum possible. It is of interest in this connection to mention that in the Christchurch Painters and Decorators' award of the 25th September, 1916, an innovation was made in requiring the employers to send their apprentices to technical schools for certain hours during working-time. This was on the agreement of the parties. (Vol. xvii, p. 944.)

The question of the better training of apprentices in the various industries has during the past few years engaged the attention of employers' and workers' representatives, as well as of educational experts. This question is, of course, allied to that relating to technical-school work and to the need for a continuance of the control of boys and girls for a few years beyond the age at which they leave the primary schools, and during the period when they are learning their life's calling. It is urged that the present Master and Apprentice Act, which is now fifty-three years old, having been passed in 1865, should be superseded by a new measure to meet not only modern but the future requirements of industry. Much information on the subject can be gathered from publications describing what is being done in other countries.