

provided in the Wellington Butchers' award. These men were bound by an award prescribing the minimum wages and other conditions of employment. Proceedings were therefore instituted, and a fine of £20 was imposed on the union.

Slaughtermen and Chamber Hands, Auckland, Southdown, and Westfield.—In order to compel the employers to comply with the demands made by the Butchers' Union in the foregoing case, the slaughtermen discontinued their employment, and the chamber hands refused to handle meat for the Auckland retail trade until the Butchers' dispute was settled. In each case the penalty to which they would render themselves liable was pointed out to them before they struck. The men were prosecuted, each of the slaughtermen being fined £3 and costs, while in the cases against the chamber hands the Magistrate's decision has not yet been given.

Imlay Freezing-works Employees (Wanganui).—The employees discontinued work upon the company's refusing to accede to their demands for an increase for killing wet sheep. Three days later a conference was arranged at which the workers agreed to resume under the old conditions. The men being bound by an award, proceedings were taken, two men being fined £10 and costs, and twenty-two others £5 and costs.

Flaxmill Employees, Makerua (Manawatu).—These men were working under an award, and in an agreement between the employers and the union it was provided that should a revision of the scale of wages be necessary one month's notice on either side should be given. Considering that the flax was of poorer quality than usual, the men demanded an increase of 2s. a ton; the employer conceded 1s. a ton increase pending a conference, but the men, refusing to accept this, ceased work. Proceedings are being taken.

Engineers, Iron and Brass Moulders, and Boilermakers' Unions, Christchurch.—The members of these unions, who were working under awards providing for the payment of a war bonus in addition to the ordinary rate of wages, decided not to work any further overtime until the employers took into account the war bonus in computing the amount of overtime payable, which the Court had ruled they need not do. Proceedings were taken. The question at issue was whether the employers had the right to expect their employees to work overtime. The Magistrate decided that it is the duty of the worker to obey an order to work overtime, provided that such order is reasonable. Each of the three unions was fined £10.

Roslyn Woollen-mills Employees.—Fourteen employees working under an award discontinued their employment as a result of the action of the employers in deciding to replace a sub-foreman who, the firm alleged, had insufficient control over the workers. Twelve adult males were prosecuted and fined £2 and costs.

North Cape Coal-miners, Nelson.—A dispute arose because the employers transferred to different work a man employed on the surface on weekly wages—a right conferred upon them by the industrial agreement. The man, refusing to perform this work, was dismissed. The miners requested that he should be reinstated, and the company agreed to re-employ him as a trucker in the mine—an arrangement, however, to which the miners would not agree. The men then struck. Proceedings were taken in the Magistrate's Court, where judgment was given for the defendants on the ground that the industrial agreement was invalid in that it was made for a longer period than that allowed by law. An appeal was made to the Arbitration Court, which decided in favour of the Department. The case was then referred to the Magistrate, who fined each of the miners £5 and costs.

Green Island Coal-miners, Dunedin.—The Miners' Union demanded a variation in the working-conditions, to which the owners, who contended that such conditions were governed by the existing award, refused to agree. The men struck. After work had been discontinued for ten weeks the dispute was finally settled by a conference. Seventy-eight miners were prosecuted, and in each case a fine of £2 and costs was imposed.

Taratu Coal-miners, Dunedin.—These miners discontinued employment owing to the allegedly wrongful dismissal of a worker. After the mine had been idle for four days the men resumed unconditionally, and subsequently the dismissed worker was reinstated. The men being bound by an award, proceedings were taken; two were fined £3, forty-seven £2, and one £1, and costs in each case.

Engineers, Boilermakers, and Iron and Brass Moulders' Unions, Auckland.—After the Arbitration Court had decided that in computing the amount of overtime the war bonus was not to be taken into consideration, the above unions decided to work no further overtime until the decision of the Court was reversed or until a written guarantee that the war bonus would be included in the computation was obtained from the Ironmasters' Association. In this action about six hundred members of the Allied Iron Trades Unions were involved. Proceedings were taken and each union was fined £50.

No doubt, many of the strikes mentioned were largely due to the general industrial unrest prevailing in other parts of the world. It is a curious fact that nearly all unions in New Zealand, including those that have taken part in the strikes mentioned, have preserved their registration under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, which makes strikes by the workers concerned unlawful; while very few of them have elected to come under the alternative—Labour Disputes Investigation Act—which permits a strike taking place after a reasonable time has been allowed for investigation and publicity.* Possibly this anomalous position is due rather to the impatience of the moment, one of the aftermaths of the war, than to a determination to adopt the strike weapon as the usual method of redressing grievances.

The fact that so few unions have exercised their right to cancel registration under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act goes to support the view that the workers prefer to remain under the protection of that Act, which now provides for increases of wages from time to time on account of the increase of the cost of living. In support of this view the opinion has been recently expressed by those with a knowledge of the subject that industrial conditions throughout the Dominion are

* There were on the 31st March, 1920, 519 awards and industrial agreements in force, while only eleven agreements were in operation outside of the Act.