

*Prosecutions.*

There were 241 prosecutions taken by Inspectors for breaches of the Act and of awards; of these thirty-six were dismissed. In addition, two cases, resulting in one conviction and one dismissal, were instituted by unions.

*Registration of Industrial Unions and Associations.*

During the period thirty-three new workers' unions and two employers' unions were registered.

Six employers' and twenty-one workers' unions were cancelled. Of the twenty-one cancellations of workers' unions, eight were merely for the purpose of reorganization in some other form under the Act, twelve were due to the unions becoming defunct, while one was apparently cancelled for the purpose of terminating its award (the specified currency of which had expired), and thus bringing itself under the Labour Disputes Investigation Act.

Attention might be called to five instances since the Labour Disputes Investigation Act was passed in 1913 where unions have cancelled their registration under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and filed disputes for investigation under the Labour Disputes Investigation Act, 1913. In one of these cases, after reaching a settlement thereunder, the workers re-registered under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The cases referred to are shown on page 11.

It will be noted that in all only seventeen unions have had disputes (numbering twenty) dealt with under the Labour Disputes Investigation Act, while there are 563 awards and agreements in force under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

The usual statutory return (to the 31st December, 1920) of the unions registered under the Act, with their membership at that date, is published herewith as an appendix. Comparison with the previous year shows that there has been a decrease of four in the number of employers' unions, with an increase in membership of 237. The total number of workers' unions registered increased by twelve, and the total membership by 13,797.

*Decisions of Interest given during the Year.*

Following on the passing of the War Legislation and Statute Law Amendment Act, which established the important principle that the Court of Arbitration should alter wages from time to time as the cost of living changed, several interesting pronouncements of the Court have been made, as follows:—

1. In a memorandum dated the 19th April, 1919, the Court outlined the procedure that it intended to adopt in connection with applications under this section; and the basic wage for skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers was then fixed as follows: Skilled, 1s. 7½d.; semi-skilled, 1s. 4½d. to 1s. 6d.; unskilled, 1s. 3½d. To these wages was added a bonus of 2½d. to compensate workers for the further increase in the cost of living up to the 31st March, 1919.

An arrangement was made with the Government Statistician to prepare half-yearly, for the periods ended September and March, a special report showing the movement of prices; and the Court stated that an adjustment in wages based on this report would be made half-yearly on application.

2. Later, in December, 1919, the Court decided that the basic wages so fixed should be increased by 1d. an hour to hourly workers and 4s. a week to weekly workers, to be made payable as from January, 1920.

3. In April, 1920, a further bonus was granted of 1½d. an hour to adult male hourly workers, 6s. a week to adult male weekly workers, and 3s. a week to adult female workers, to be made payable as from the 1st May, 1920. In the judgment granting this bonus the Court stated that in consequence of the general shortage of labour and of the fact that employers in several industries had by agreement with their workers raised the basic wages of such workers above those fixed by the Court in April, 1919, it would increase basic wages of workers as follows: Skilled workers, 2s. an hour; semi-skilled workers, 1s. 8d. to 1s. 10d. an hour; unskilled workers, 1s. 7d. an hour; and a bonus of 3d. an hour was added to cover the increased cost of living up to the 31st March, 1920. The Court also stated that in making awards after April, 1920, it would, except in special cases, fix the minimum rate of wages and bonus in accordance with the statement above.

4. In November, 1920, the Court announced that unless good cause was shown to the contrary it intended granting the following further bonuses: To male adult workers, 2½d. an hour, or 9s. a week, as the case may be; to female workers over the age of twenty years, 4s. 6d. a week; to females under the age of twenty years and to youths and apprentices, 3s. a week: to take effect as from the 1st November, 1920.

The employers having opposed the granting of these last bonuses for the period November, 1920, to March, 1921, representatives of the employers and workers were heard on the matter and the position was argued. As a result the Court held (a) that owing to a misunderstanding the bonuses granted for the periods ended September, 1919, and March, 1920, had been based on the monthly index number of the Government Statistician's cost-of-living tables instead of on a six-months moving-average index number; (b) that, correctly calculated, the bonus for male adult workers for the period under review should be 5s. a week instead of 9s.; (c) that, taking into consideration the economic conditions of the country, the financial stringency having commenced, and the fact that the workers had from the 1st January to the 31st October, 1920, been in receipt of 2s. a week in excess of the correct bonus, the bonus for the period November, 1920, to March, 1921, was fixed at 3s. a week.

*Industrial Union and Guild in the same Industry.*

An industrial union of clerks and office employees registered under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act sought to obtain an award fixing the conditions of employment with certain freezing companies. Most of the actual employees of these companies, in conjunction with