

WAGES IN NEW ZEALAND.

A comparison has been made between the minimum rates of wages payable under awards and the rates of wages generally paid to adult male workers (other than foremen) in a number of the principal trades in the four chief centres in New Zealand. From this comparison the following information is given :—

Industry.	Award Rates.	Rates generally paid.
	Per Hour.	Per Hour.
Bricklayers	2s. 3½d. and 2s. 4d.	2s. 3½d. and 2s. 4d. to 3s.
Carpenters and joiners	2s. 3d. and 2s. 3¾d.	2s. 3d. to 2s. 6d.
Electrical workers	2s. 2d.	2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d.
Painters	2s. 2d.	2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d.
Plasterers	2s. 3½d. and 2s. 4d.	2s. 3½d. and 2s. 4d. to 2s. 9d.
Plumbers	2s. 2d.	2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d.
Builders' labourers	1s. 9d. to 1s. 11d.	1s. 9d. to 2s.
Bakers	2s. 1½d.	2s. 1½d. to 2s. 2d.
Boilermakers	2s. 2d.	2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d.
Bootmakers	1s. 11¼d.	1s. 11¼d. to 2s. 1d.
Cabinetmakers	2s. 2d.	2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d.
Compositors	2s. 3½d.	2s. 3½d. to 2s. 4¾d.
Drivers	One horse, 1s. 9d.; two or more horses, 1s. 9½d.	1s. 9d. to 1s. 10½d.
Sheet-metal workers	2s. 2d.	2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d.
Tailors	1s. 8½d. to 2s. 2d.	1s. 10d. to 2s. 2d.

REGISTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIONS.

The usual statutory return (to the 31st December, 1925) of the associations and unions registered under the Act, with their membership at that date, is published herewith as an appendix. Comparison with the previous year shows that the total number of workers' unions has decreased by thirteen (due to the absorption of some of the smaller unions into larger bodies, and to the fact that three unions in the coal-mining industry decided to cancel their registration under the Act), but the total membership has nevertheless increased by 3,718. The total number of employers' unions has increased by five.

PROSECUTIONS.

There were 329 prosecutions for breaches of awards and agreements other than stoppages of work, 303 against employers and 26 against workers; 283 convictions were recorded; 21 prosecutions were taken for miscellaneous breaches of the Act other than strikes, 16 against employers and 5 against workers; 14 convictions were obtained; 122 workers were prosecuted for striking or otherwise ceasing employment (6 strikes), and 105 convictions were obtained; 1 association and 2 of its officers were fined for instigating such cessations of work.

INSPECTIONS.

During the year 3,026 complaints of breaches of awards and industrial agreements, &c., were received and investigated. Apart from these, a large proportion of the general inspections of factories and shops, totalling 29,442, included an inspection to ascertain whether the awards and agreements were being complied with in respect of wages, overtime, &c.

UNION ACCOUNTS.

There has been no occasion during the year to call for an audit of the accounts of any union. A few instances have been brought under the notice of unions, however, of small amounts of union funds being used for purposes not authorized by the Act.

LEGAL DECISIONS OF INTEREST.

1. *Action for Damages for Loss of Employment.*—Where a number of slaughtermen in order to induce the employer to dismiss a certain worker reduced their rate of killing from twelve and fourteen an hour to four an hour, it was held that, apart from the question whether it was a "strike" within the meaning of the Act, this was a breach of a provision in the award which declared it to be the essence of the award that work should always proceed in the customary manner, and should not on any account be impeded. Illegal means had accordingly been resorted to to induce the employer to dismiss the worker, who was therefore awarded damages: *Ruddock v. Sinclair*.

2. *Farm Hands, Otago and Southland—Refusal to make Award.*—The Court refused to make an award covering general farm hands on the grounds (1) that the conditions of work on the various kinds of farms differed to such an extent that very cogent evidence and very full information (which were not tendered) would be necessary before an award could be made; (2) that a union with a membership of 100 could not be held fairly to represent 16,000 farm workers, nor could the 90 respondents be regarded as sufficient to justify the making of an award that would in time apply to