

subsequently advertised for “free labour,” and many applications were received. The strike was unofficially declared off four weeks after its commencement. A similar position arose at Feilding. It was decided not to prosecute the men for striking, though a breach of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act had occurred.

Coal-miners, Hikurangi.—Two truckers who had quarrelled with the underviewer over a mistake in their pay were subsequently considered by the management to have wilfully caused a derailment which occurred and which resulted in damage to the mine property. On the underviewer’s statement that they would not be paid for the time the work was held up for repairs the two men absented themselves, and were thereupon dismissed. The union regarded this as victimization, and the whole of the miners, numbering 119, ceased work with the object of securing the truckers reinstatement. The mediation of a departmental Inspector resulted in both sides agreeing to a week’s suspension of the two men, and the work was resumed. Prosecution was not considered necessary; it appeared that there had been some fault on both sides.

Coal-miners, West Coast.—The workers employed in all the West Coast coal-mines ceased work for one day in two instances on the date of the prosecution of miners for instigating an illegal strike. No action was taken for the breach that thus occurred.

Coal-miners, Stockton.—All the workers at the Stockton Mine ceased work to compel the management to employ local workers in preference to new-comers. This dispute was still in progress at the end of the year. The men claimed that there was an understanding with the employers to the effect mentioned.

Coal-miners, Millerton.—350 miners ceased work for one day as a protest against the dismissal of a worker who had been idling in the mine. The worker concerned had been merely suspended for a day, and on ascertaining this fact the men resumed work. It was decided not to institute proceedings for the breach of the Labour Disputes Investigation Act that had taken place.

DISPUTES DEALT WITH UNDER THE LABOUR DISPUTES INVESTIGATION ACT.

Industry affected.	Particulars.	Ballot of Workers.	Nature of Settlement.
Glassworkers, Auckland ..	Conference called by Conciliation Commissioner proving abortive, dispute referred to Labour Disputes Committee. Settlement resulted	Not required	Agreement filed pursuant to section 8 (1).
Gas Company’s clerical and show - rooms employees, Auckland ..	Conference called by Conciliation Commissioner. Settlement resulted	Ditto	Ditto.
Gas employees, Auckland ..	Dispute referred directly to Labour Disputes Committee. Settlement resulted.	..	..

None of the above disputes resulted in a strike or lockout. In twelve instances, however, strikes of coal-miners took place on various minor questions that arose after their agreement was made. In two of these prosecutions were instituted.

This Act permits of strikes and lockouts taking place provided there is no award or industrial agreement in force under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and provided that a certain period—about three weeks—has been allowed for an investigation and for a ballot on the question at issue. Only twenty-four unions have had their disputes dealt with under the Act since its inception in 1913. There are now ten agreements in operation under that Act, while there are 489 awards and industrial agreements in force. It will be noticed that all the disputes dealt with last year were settled without any strike taking place and without the necessity for ballots on the question of striking or accepting any recommendation made. Arising out of the disputes filed under the Act since its inception to date only four ballots have been necessary, and in none of these cases did a strike take place in pursuance of such a ballot.

APPRENTICES ACT.

This Act had on the 31st March, 1926, been in operation for two years, and the following information is given respecting the work done thereunder from its inception, under the various provisions mentioned.

The Act makes provision by which, in order that every encouragement and assistance should be given to boys to proceed to skilled trades, reports on the boys leaving schools should be forwarded by head teachers to the Department, which would then get into touch with the boys and their parents, inviting them, where employment is desired, to make application accordingly to the Department, stating the kinds of employment desired. Reports on a large number of boys leaving the schools were received accordingly, but only 894 of the boys applied to the Department for assistance. The boys were apparently able in most cases to make their own arrangements for employment.