

with the Act; for an increase in the minimum overtime rate for office assistants from 9d. to 1s. 6d. per hour, and also for a meal-allowance of 1s. 6d. on any day in which overtime is worked; for an occupier of an office to keep a time and wages book in the same manner as occupiers of shops and to pay to office-assistants the minimum rates prescribed for shop-assistants; and for the minimum rates of wages prescribed for shop-assistants to be paid to all assistants employed in solicitors' offices, mining companies' offices, and miners' union offices, overtime not being payable to such workers.

Miscellaneous.—To prevent the placing of junior workers in charge of small shops, thereby evading the provisions of the Act in respect of the employment of assistants, it is provided that occupiers in receipt of a wage of not more than £6 a week in the case of males and £4 a week in the case of females shall be subject to all the provisions of the Act relating to shop-assistants.

The provisions of awards and industrial agreements have been made subject to the provisions of the Act, but this was not to be construed to reduce rates of wages being paid pursuant to any award or industrial agreement, or to increase working-hours fixed by any such award or agreement.

To prevent dismissals or wage-reductions following the reduction of working-hours pursuant to the Act it is provided that, if any person had his wages reduced or was dismissed after the commencement of the Act, the onus was placed on the employer of proving that such reduction or dismissal was not contrary to the Act.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

WORK DONE UNDER THE ACT DURING THE YEAR 1936-37.

Industrial agreements filed	..	..	..	60 (last year 36).
Awards of the Court of Arbitration	..	..	..	127 (last year 65).

The awards and industrial agreements actually in force on the 31st March, 1937, total 469 (last year 417).

Some new occupations now covered, in part, by awards or agreements which have not previously been covered, except possibly in a minor degree, are clerical workers; coal-carbonization employees; dental assistants and technicians; fruit preserving and vegetable canning employees; flock, felt, and spring workers; gate, fence, and wire workers; laundry-workers; optical employees; paint and varnish workers; piano tuners and repairers; roofing-tilers; sports-goods employees; stevedores and foremen; tile-layers; tobacco-workers; warehousemen.

WORK PERFORMED BY COMMISSIONERS AND COUNCILS OF CONCILIATION.

Industrial agreements made under section 28 of the principal Act	..	60 (last year 30).
Disputes where recommendations were substantially accepted or agreements reached and referred to the Court to make awards	..	206 (last year 69).
Disputes where partial settlement was arrived at and referred to the Court to make awards	..	67

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION AMENDMENT ACT, 1936.

This Act came into operation on the 8th June, 1936, except as regards the reduction in working-hours, which operated from 1st September, 1936.

As the result of legal decisions it was found that the definition "industrial matters" contained in the principal Act of 1925 did not permit of the inclusion in awards and agreements of a number of matters for which it had been the practice of the parties to make provision, such as the notification of starting and finishing hours, notification of the employment of non-unionists, and other similar matters, this being remedied by this measure. The Amendment Act further provides that the Court of Arbitration shall of its own motion within six months after the coming into operation of the Act fix basic rates of wages for adult male and adult female workers, the basic rate for adult male workers to be such as would enable a man to maintain a wife and three children in a fair and reasonable standard of comfort. These rates may be reviewed by the Court at intervals of not less than six months. In fixing these rates the Court is to have regard to the general economic and financial conditions affecting trade and industry in New Zealand, and also to the cost of living. No adult male or female worker, the conditions of whose employment are fixed by any award or industrial agreement, may receive less than the basic rate so fixed, but provision is made for the issue in special cases of a permit for a worker to receive less than the basic rate.

The Court fixed the basic wage rates as follows:—

For adult male workers: £3 16s. per week.

For adult female workers: £1 16s. per week (47·37 per cent. of male rate).

At the hearing a question was raised as to the meaning to be given to the word "adult" as used in the section. In the Court's opinion the word must be given its ordinary and natural meaning—viz., a person who has attained to legal majority (*i.e.*, a person of the age of twenty-one years and upwards).

This order came into force on the 2nd day of November, 1936.

During the hearing of the Wellington Industrial District Drug, Chemical, Condiment, Sauce, and Pickle Workers' dispute the Court was asked to clarify, in relation to the basic rate of wages, the position of the casual workers. The memorandum to the award in the dispute referred to stated:—

"The award fixes the rate of wages for casual workers at 2s. 6d. per hour for adult male workers and 1s. 3d. per hour for adult female workers. The basic rate of wages fixed by the Court is £3 16s. per week for adult male workers and £1 16s. per week for adult females.