

INSPECTIONS, ETC.

During the year 6,478 complaints of alleged breaches of the Act and of awards and industrial agreements, &c., were received, but it was found on investigation that in 2,133 cases no breach had been committed. In 479 cases proceedings were taken, and in 3,110 warnings were given. No action was considered necessary in the remaining cases. Apart from the complaints mentioned above, a large proportion of the inspections of factories, shops, &c., included an inspection to ascertain whether the awards and agreements were being complied with in respect of wages, overtime, &c., and, as a result of these inspections, 137 prosecutions were taken and warnings were given in other cases. Of the 616 prosecutions, 537 were against employers and 79 against workers: 493 convictions were recorded, 424 against employers and 69 against workers. Total penalties, £784 8s. 6d.

Many of the complaints mentioned above had reference to the non-restoration of 1931 award or agreement rates of remuneration pursuant to the Finance Act, 1936, and in addition thereto the Department's Inspectors investigated 849 other complaints where awards or agreements were not involved, while 238 cases were discovered by the Inspectors themselves, the action taken on these cases being included above.

As a result of the work arising out of the Finance Act, 1936, the Department's officers were unable to devote much time to the routine inspection duties that are ordinarily undertaken.

REGISTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIONS.

As a result of the accession to power of the Labour Government and the passing of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act, 1936, which provides for compulsory unionism in the case of workers, a large number of organizations of both employers and workers made application for registration during the year. Details of these applications are as follows:—

Unions: Employers, 97; workers, 315.

Associations: Employers, 7; workers, 3.

As may be imagined, the examination of these applications and the revision of the rules of those organizations for which registration was approved involved an enormous amount of work on the part of the Department's officers, particular care being required in order to avoid a needless multiplicity of unions. It is interesting to note in this connection that of the 422 applications received registration has been granted in only 245 cases, as follows:—

Unions registered—

Employers, 89 (including two registered after close of year).

Workers, 146 (including three registered after close of year).

Associations registered—

Employers, 7 (including two registered after close of year).

Workers, 3.

An important feature of the new legislation was that permitting the registration of unions covering the whole Dominion, the whole of the North or South Island, or any group of two or more industrial districts. Up to the 15th June, 1937, thirteen employers' and eleven workers' organizations have been registered under this provision. Excepting in six cases (four employers' and two workers' unions) registration covers the whole Dominion.

The new unions cover a large number of trades or occupations in which no such organizations previously existed or existed in only a minor degree—for example, there was a clerical workers' union in Christchurch with only a small membership. These new unions are:—

Workers.—Architects' and structural engineers' assistants; coal-carbonization workers; clerical workers; soap, candle, &c., workers; dental employees; domestic workers; Harbour Board employees; herd-testers; ice-cream workers; laundry employees; local-body officers; optical employees; oyster-trade employees; paint and varnish manufacturing employees; rubber-workers; sports-goods employees; roofing tilers and slaters; tile-layers; tobacco-manufacturing employees; foremen stevedores, &c.; wireless operators (marine); farm and station hands; forestry, orchard, tobacco-plantation, and other rural workers.

Employers.—Farmers (agricultural and related farmers, dairy-farmers, tomato and produce growers, hop-growers); bacon-curers; booksellers; brick, clay products and concrete-pipe manufacturers; cardboard-box makers; confectionery-manufacturers; dentists; drug, chemical, condiment, &c., manufacturers; Electric-power Boards; electrical contractors and traders; electroplaters; glass, oil, colour, &c., merchants; hat-manufacturers; jam-manufacturers; jewellers, &c.; laundrymen; dyers, &c.; opticians; paint and varnish manufacturers; private-hotel keepers; radio traders; restaurant-proprietors; saddlers, sail, tent, and canvas goods manufacturers; soap-manufacturers; tanners; woollscourers.

The usual statutory return (to 31st December, 1936) of the associations and unions on the register, with membership as at that date, is appended hereto. Comparison with the previous year shows that employers' unions have increased by 70 (from 131 to 201), with an additional total membership of 2,098 (from 4,344 to 6,442), while workers' unions have increased by 77 (from 410 to 487), with a total increase in membership of 104,598 (from 80,929 to 185,527).