

(7482.) COAL-MINERS.—AMENDMENT OF AWARDS AND INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENTS.

In the Court of Arbitration of New Zealand, Northern, Westland, Canterbury, and Otago and Southland Industrial Districts.—
In the matter of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1908, and its amendments; and in the matter of all coal-mines awards and industrial agreements now in force in the Dominion of New Zealand.

Monday, the 9th day of April, 1923.

WHEREAS, pursuant to a special provision contained in each of the said awards and industrial agreements, power is reserved to the Court, of its own motion and by general order, to increase or diminish the

excess rates of remuneration fixed and defined by the said awards and industrial agreements over the standard rates as from the 1st day of May and 1st day of November, commencing on the 1st day of May, 1922, in the ratio between (a) the percentage of the increase in the retail prices of food for the preceding March or September respectively over the retail prices of food current in July, 1914, as shown by the Government Statistician's returns of the three food groups combined, and (b) the percentage of the increase (57·76) in the retail prices of food shown in the return for the month of January, 1920, over the retail prices of food current in July, 1914: And whereas it is further provided in the said awards and industrial agreements that in calculating the increases or decreases of time rates the calculation shall be made to the nearest penny, and in the case of piecework rates to the nearest farthing: And whereas the ascertained percentage of increase in the retail prices of food for the month of March, 1923, over the retail prices of food current in the month of July, 1914, is 41·31:

Now, therefore, in pursuance of the said special provisions of the said awards and industrial agreements, and of every other power in that behalf thereto enabling it, this Court doth hereby order as follows:—

1. That the excess rates of remuneration over and above the standard rates as fixed and defined by each of the said awards and industrial agreements shall be diminished in the ratio which 57·76 bears to 41·31.

2. That this order shall operate and take effect as from the 1st day of May, 1923, and shall continue in force during the currency of each respective award and industrial agreement, or until such time as the Court shall otherwise order.

3. That this order shall be deemed to be incorporated in and form part of each of the said awards and industrial agreements respectively as from the 1st day of May, 1923.

* [L.S.]

F. V. FRAZER, Judge.

MEMORANDUM.

This order is made in accordance with the provisions of the clause headed "Variation of Rates" appearing in the different coal-mines awards and industrial agreements. The rates fixed by the awards and industrial agreements are, in the case of time rates, 60 per cent. above the rates payable in 1914, and, in the case of piecework rates, 50 per cent. above the 1914 rates. The increases of 60 per cent. and 50 per cent. were adopted from the national agreement made in February, 1920, which provided for these increases on the basis of the price-statistics for food for the month of January, 1920, which then showed an increase of 57·76 per cent. over the prices ruling in July, 1914. The Court accordingly decided to base subsequent six-monthly increases and reductions of rates on the

percentage of increase or decrease disclosed by the Government Statistician's returns of food-prices for the months of March and September in each year. The 57·76 per cent. increase of January, 1920, was represented by increases of 41·21 per cent. in March, 1922, 39·44 per cent. in September, 1922, and 41·31 per cent. in March, 1923. The variations in the rates of remuneration payable to coal-miners do not coincide with the variations in the rates of remuneration of other workers, whose cost-of-living adjustments are based on the all-groups statistics. The last reduction in the rates of miners was a small one, and the effect of the present order is to increase their rates by a fraction more than the amount of that reduction: that is, the new rates will be, roughly, equal to those payable for the half-year May to October, 1922.

The standard rates are equivalent to $\frac{100}{180}$ of the time rates and $\frac{100}{150}$ of the piecework rates set out in the awards and industrial agreements. The present increase, as in the case of the former reductions, applies only to the remaining $\frac{60}{180}$ and $\frac{50}{150}$ respectively. By way of illustration, we give two examples of the effect of this order on time and piece rates:—

(a.) A time rate of 16s. is made up of 10s. standard rate and 6s. excess rate. The order of 24th April, 1922, reduced the 6s. in the ratio of 57·76 to 41·21—that is, to 4s. 3d.—making the total rate 14s. 3d. The order of 7th October, 1922, reduced the 6s. in the ratio of 57·76 to 39·44—that is, to 4s. 1d.—making the total rate 14s. 1d. The present order reduces the 6s. in the ratio of 57·76 to 41·31—that is, to 4s. 3d.—making the total rate 14s. 3d., or 2d. more than the present rate.

(b.) A piecework rate of 7s. 6d. is made up of 5s. standard rate and 2s. 6d. excess rate. The order of 24th April, 1922, reduced the 2s. 6d. in the ratio of 57·76 to 41·21—that is, to 1s. 9½d.—making the total rate 6s. 9½d. The order of 7th October, 1922, reduced the 2s. 6d. in the ratio of 57·76 to 39·44—that is, to 1s. 8½d.—making the total rate 6s. 8½d. The present order reduces the 2s. 6d. in the ratio of 57·76 to 41·31—that is, to 1s. 9½d.—making the total rate 6s. 9½d., or 1d. more than the present rate.