

NEW ZEALAND (EXCEPT OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND)
CARPENTERS AND JOINERS.—APPLICATION FOR AMEND-
MENT OF AWARD

In the Court of Arbitration of New Zealand.—In the matter of the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations 1942; and in the matter of an application for amendment of the New Zealand (except Otago and Southland) Carpenters and Joiners' award, dated the 7th day of July, 1947, and recorded in 47 Book of Awards 994.

JUDGMENT OF THE COURT, DELIVERED BY TYNDALL, J.

ON 21st August, 1947, the Court, of its own motion and pursuant to Regulation 39C of the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulation 1942, amended the rate of wage prescribed in the New Zealand (except Otago and Southland) Carpenters and Joiners award (47 Book of Awards 994) to give effect to the Court's pronouncement of 15th August, 1947.

In the pronouncement the Court announced that in future the standard minimum rate of wages for skilled adult male workers would be 3s. 7d. per hour. The amendment to the New Zealand Carpenters and Joiners' award of 21st August, 1947, prescribed 3s. 7d. per hour as the minimum rate for workers under that award.

An application made under Regulation 39A by the New Zealand (except Otago and Southland) Carpenters and Joiners and Joiners' Machinists' Industrial Union of Workers is now before the Court. The application asks that the minimum wage for workers covered by the award shall be increased from 3s. 7d. to 3s. 8½d. per hour.

The grounds for the application are that the increase is necessary in order to restore and preserve the relationship existing as on 17th March, 1945, between the New Zealand (except Otago and Southland) Carpenters and Joiners' award and other awards applying to the building industry.

The application is opposed by the employers.

At the hearing no evidence was called, but it was pointed out on behalf of the workers that recent increases granted to plumbers under the New Zealand (except Westland) Plumbers and Gasfitters' award (46 Book of Awards 1473) and to fibrous plasterers under the Northern, Taranaki, Wellington, Marlborough, and Nelson Plasterers, Fibrous-plasterers, and Tile Fixers' award (46 Book of Awards 1537) had disturbed the previously existing relationships between those trades and the carpenter and joiner.

In the memorandum to the former award, however, it was expressly stated that the increase of 1½d. to plumbers had been granted in consideration of the fact that the period of apprenticeship for plumbers is six years. This condition does not apply in the case of carpenters and joiners, and the increase granted to plumbers, therefore, cannot be accepted as a valid ground for a similar increase in the rate of wages for carpenters and joiners.

With regard to the Plasterers' award, the present relationship between the rates of wages of carpenters and joiners and journeymen plasterers is no different from that which has prevailed for some years, but in view of convincing submissions made to the Court the rates for journeymen fibrous plasterers were recently brought up to the rates prescribed for journeymen plasterers.

After having regard to the general purpose of the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations, however, we cannot recognize that this adjustment is an adequate reason for disturbing the relationship which has so long prevailed between the rates prescribed for carpenters and joiners and the minimum hourly rates for skilled adult male workers which have from time to time been fixed by the Court in its various pronouncements.

The application is accordingly declined.

Mr. Allerby is not in agreement, and his dissenting opinion follows.

Dated this 17th day of December, 1947.

[L.S.]

A. TYNDALL, Judge.

DISSENTING OPINION OF MR. ALLERBY

I wish to record my dissent.

With each adjustment of the wages scale on a flat basis the skilled workers' relative position in respect of rates of remuneration is worsened. A case can be established for an increase in the skilled rate.