

## SECTION II.—LABOUR ORGANISATIONS.

1. **General.**—Trade unionism and the organisation of labour are attracting a closer attention to-day than perhaps at any previous time, both in Australia and elsewhere. The information given in this section is intended to shew the general situation in regard to this movement in the Commonwealth at the present time, as well as its development since the year 1891. Returns were first collected from the Secretary of each trade union throughout Australia, shewing—among other things—the date and scheme or system of organisation; this was followed by the form already referred to and shewn in Appendix I.

It is ordinarily but little realised that the systems of organisation already evolved are varied and in some cases even elaborate, a fact not adequately appreciated even by many actually engaged in the work of labour organisation. The statistical information here given will therefore be of value, not only to the public generally, but even to those participating in, or directly affected by that work.

2. **Confidential Nature of Individual Returns.**—The cordial co-operation of the officials of labour organisations has greatly minimised the difficulties of collecting comprehensive figures relating to the development of organised labour, but even with this assistance the task of obtaining a complete enumeration of practically the whole of the unions in Australia has been a formidable one. Only very few of the smaller unions maintain business offices. The frequent change of officers; the failure to appreciate that it was compulsory (under the provisions of the Census and Statistics Act 1905) upon the Secretaries to answer the inquiries to the best of their knowledge, belief and information; the organisation and dissolving of unions and branches; misconceptions as to the object and value of the investigations of the Bureau, and the disinclination to furnish information of a confidential nature, the publication of which might (it was thought) be detrimental to the interests of trade unionism, have all contributed to delay the completion of the work. It is, consequently, more than ordinarily satisfactory to observe that it is now widely recognised by labour organisations that *statistics of individual organisations are absolutely confidential.*

3. **Types of Trade Unions in Australia.**—The types of trade unions in Australia are very diverse in character, and range from the small independent association to the large inter-State organisation, which, in its turn, may be merely a branch of a British or international union. Broadly speaking, there are four distinct classes of labour organisations, viz. :—(i.) the *local independent*, (ii.) the *State*, (iii.), the *inter-State*, and (iv.) the *Australasian or international*, but a number of variations occur from each of these classes.

(i.) **Local Independent Unions.**—The local independent trade union is composed of wage-earners working in a definite locality and employed

in the same trade or occupation. It is autonomous and its affairs are directed by an executive committee, created and empowered by direct vote of the members in formal meetings. Certain organisations of this type, extending over a considerable area (such, for example, as miners' associations), are divided, mainly for the purpose of the collection of subscriptions, into subordinate departments, for each of which a collector or shop-steward is appointed. These sub-departments are known as "lodges" or "agencies."

(ii.) *State Associations.*—State unions have a head office or "lodge," generally in the capital town of the State in which they operate, and branch "lodges" in the localities which form the chief industrial centres for wage-earners following the trade or occupation organised. The degree of autonomy enjoyed by the branch lodges varies, but generally the members of the branches possess full powers of government over their own affairs. In some unions, however, certain questions, such as control of disputes, matters of finance, and power to impose levies, are expressly vested in a *central executive* appointed by the whole of the members. Secretaries of lodges furnish periodic statements as to membership, subscriptions and funds, as well as copies of balance-sheets to the head office secretary, and provision is usually made in the rules to the effect that each lodge may retain a specified sum in order to meet working expenses of the lodge, but all amounts over that sum must be paid into a general fund controlled by trustees appointed by the whole union. The object of this arrangement is to provide a financial basis for general organising purposes or for concerted action in matters affecting the welfare of the union as a whole. An important example of this type of union is the State union, organised by localities, and not by trade or occupation. Any "bona-fide worker" may become a member of such a union, and the rules provide for the organisation of branches sending delegates to district committees, with a central executive and annual conference.

(iii.) *Interstate or Federated Unions.*—A union of this type consists of a group of organisations covering a larger territory than a single State, but ordinarily having jurisdiction over but one trade or several closely allied trades. An inter-State union has a central executive office situated, generally, in one of the metropolitan towns. In most cases there is also a head State office in each State in which the union operates. Though generally possessing wide powers of self-government in each State, the supreme authority is vested in the annual conference of delegates and in a central executive body. State branches often have sub-branches throughout the State. These sub-branches are generally responsible, and make periodic returns as to membership, finance, etc., to the head State offices, which in turn send in their statements to the general secretary of the whole organisation. The executive or managing committee is usually elected annually at a meeting of the general council, the delegates to which are themselves elected by members of each State branch, the number of delegates from each State being apportioned on a membership basis. The revenue of the central body is ordinarily derived from capitation fees payable by each State, and, after payment of management expenses, is set aside for organising work and for legal expenses, etc. In the case of unions registered under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904-1911, the federal

rules must comply with the provisions of that Act, and similarly in case of a State branch or an independent State union being registered under a State Trade Union or Industrial Act, the rules must comply with the provisions of the State Act.

(iv.) *Australasian, British and International Organisations.*—An association of this type represents a group of State unions forming an Australian section of a wider organisation extending to other parts of the world. For example, in regard to persons occupied in the merchant service, it has been found advantageous and convenient, in view of the nomadic nature of the occupations, to include the organisation of the workers in New Zealand with those in Australia. The control of such a union is primarily vested in a federal council, consisting of delegates from the "districts." District councils have cognizance of all matters of merely local interest.

Another type of organisation is the Australian section of the British national or international organisation, which may have branch sections also in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, and other countries. In so far as these Australian sections are concerned, they do not differ widely from the inter-State or federated unions, to which reference has already been made.

**4. Number and Membership of Trade Unions and Branches, 1912.**—The following table gives particulars of the number of trade unions, the number of branch unions and the number of members in each State and the Commonwealth at the end of the year 1912.

**Number of Trade Unions, Branch Unions and Membership, 1912.**

Particulars.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Total.	C*with.
No. of Separate Unions ..	177	151	67	78	97	51	621	†408
No. of Branches ..	453	241	226	62	177	33	1,192	1,405
No. of Members ..	192,626	116,557	44,768	37,336	33,282	8,655	433,224	433,224

\* Allowing for Inter-State excess. † This figure represents the number of distinct organizations and Inter-State groups of organisations in the Commonwealth. It does not represent the total number of organisations which are practically independent and self-governing. (See remarks below).

In the above table the number of separate unions in each State furnishes the number of unions which are represented in each State (exclusive of branches within a State). That is to say, each union represented in a State is only counted once, regardless of the number of branches in that State.

Except in the last column, the number of branches indicates the number of branches of State head offices, which may, of course, themselves, be branches of an inter-State or larger organisation. In taking the total number of separate unions in the Commonwealth (see last column), it is obvious that, in the case of inter-State and similar unions, there will be duplication, since each such union is counted once in each State in which it has any branches. In the figures specified in the last column, deduction is made for this duplication. State branches of inter-State or federated unions, as well as sub-branches within a State, are included under the heading "branches" in the second line of the last column. It should be observed, however, that the scheme of organisation of these inter-State or federated unions varies

greatly in character, and the number of separate Commonwealth unions does not fairly represent the number of practically independent organisations in Australia. In some of these unions the State organisations are bound together under a system of unification with centralised control, while in others the State units are practically independent and self-governing, the federal bond being loose and existing only for one or two specified purposes. It may be seen, therefore, that there are 408 distinct organisations and inter-State groups of organisations in the Commonwealth, having 1405 State branches and sub-branches, and a total of 433,224 members.

**5. Number of Unions and Membership in Industrial Groups, 1912.**—The scheme of industrial classification adopted for the grouping of unions has already been referred to (see page 6). The following table gives the number of unions and members thereof in each State. The number of unions specified for each State refers to the number of different unions represented in each State; that is to say, inter-State or federated unions are counted once in each State in which they are represented, but sub-branches within a State are not counted. In order to avoid disclosing the affairs of individual unions, in cases where there are only either one or two unions in any group in a State, the membership is not given separately.

**Number of Unions and Numbers in Industrial Groups in Each State, 1912.**

Industrial Groups.†	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'ld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Total.
NUMBER OF UNIONS.							
I. Wood, Furniture, etc. . . . .	4	4	6	4	4	2	24
II. Engineering, Metal Works, etc. . . . .	16	20	9	12	10	4	71
III. Food, Drink, Tobacco, etc. . . . .	20	18	7	8	12	5	70
IV. Clothing, Hats, Boots, etc. . . . .	9	11	3	5	3	2	33
V. Books, Printing, etc. . . . .	7	10	3	2	6	2	30
VI. Other Manufacturing . . . . .	26	21	6	12	10	5	80
VII. Building . . . . .	14	14	8	7	10	7	60
VIII. Mining, Quarries, etc. . . . .	16	3	1	2	4	2	28
IX. Railway and Tramway Services . . . . .	7	3	4	3	5	3	25
X. Other Land Transport . . . . .	6	5	3	2	2	1	19
XI. Shipping, etc. . . . .	12	5	5	7	4	8	41
XII. Pastoral, Agricultural, etc. . . . .	3	6	1	1	2	1	14
XIII. Domestic, Hotels, etc. . . . .	3	0	2	3	6	2	27
XIV. Miscellaneous . . . . .	29	25	9	10	19	7	99
<b>Total</b> . . . . .	<b>177</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>621</b>
NUMBER OF MEMBERS.							
I. Wood, Furniture, etc. . . . .	6,238	4,462	1,635	1,421	3,773	*	17,529†
II. Engineering, Metal, Works, etc. . . . .	12,912	9,169	1,044	3,862	1,341	225	29,553
III. Foods, Drink, Tobacco, etc. . . . .	11,273	8,771	4,286	2,214	1,268	320	28,132
IV. Clothing, Hats, Boots, etc. . . . .	5,936	7,728	1,245	1,005	468	*	16,382‡
V. Books, Printing, etc. . . . .	3,355	3,166	484	*	400	*	7,420†
VI. Other Manufacturing . . . . .	12,619	7,756	578	1,690	2,026	160	24,838
VII. Building . . . . .	10,719	8,185	2,174	2,236	1,893	402	25,609
VIII. Mines, Quarries, etc. . . . .	21,731	5,791	*	*	6,670	*	34,192†
IX. Railway and Tramway Services . . . . .	31,626	12,728	2,931	2,865	4,725	1,130	56,005
X. Other Land Transport . . . . .	4,708	5,220	1,878	*	*	*	12,806‡
XI. Shipping, etc. . . . .	17,540	6,026	5,039	4,136	1,530	729	35,000
XII. Pastoral, Agricultural, etc. . . . .	21,624	15,821	*	*	*	*	50,726†
XIII. Domestic, Hotels, etc. . . . .	6,008	4,860	374	1,733	1,249	*	14,238‡
XIV. Miscellaneous . . . . .	26,337	17,065	13,262	7,338	5,550	430	69,991
<b>Total</b> . . . . .	<b>192,626</b>	<b>116,557</b>	<b>44,788</b>	<b>37,336</b>	<b>33,282</b>	<b>8,655</b>	<b>433,224</b>

† See page 6 hereinbefore. \* Not available for publication separately; included in State and Commonwealth Totals. ‡ Incomplete, see footnote \*.

It may be seen that, with the exception of Group XIV., Miscellaneous, the membership is greatest in Group IX., Railway and Tramway Services (56,005 members), followed fairly closely by Group XII., Agricultural, Pastoral, etc., with over 50,000 members. The least important group from the point of view of membership is Group IV., Books, Printing, etc., with 7580 members.

**6. Number of Male and Female Members of Unions, 1912.**—The total membership of trade unions in Australia at the end of the year 1912 was 433,224, consisting of 415,554 males and 17,670 females. It may be seen from the following table that the greatest number of females in any individual group belong to Group IV. (Clothing, Hats, Boots, etc.), which comprised 6801 female members.

**Number of Male and Female Members of Trade Unions in Australia, 1912.**

Particulars.	Industrial Group No.*														Total.
	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	X.	XI.	XII.	XIII.	XIV.	
Males ...	18,567	29,953	25,951	9,890	7,302	23,755	25,609	39,203	56,005	14,546	35,000	52,060	10,379	67,314	415,554
Females ...	2	...	2,181	6,801	912	1,083	...	...	...	4	...	100	3,910	2,677	17,670
<b>Total ...</b>	<b>18,569</b>	<b>29,953</b>	<b>28,132</b>	<b>16,691</b>	<b>8,214</b>	<b>24,838</b>	<b>25,609</b>	<b>39,203</b>	<b>56,005</b>	<b>14,550</b>	<b>35,000</b>	<b>52,160</b>	<b>14,289</b>	<b>69,991</b>	<b>433,224</b>

\* As to classification in industrial groups see page 6 hereinbefore.

These figures shew that the females comprised in Groups IV. (Clothing, etc.) and XIII. (Domestic, Hotels, etc.) amount to 10,711, or 60.6 per cent. on the total female membership. Of the total membership of all groups, 415,554, or 95.9 per cent., were males, and 17,670, or 4.1 per cent., females.

**7. Percentage of Male and Female Members of Unions on Total Number of Employees 20 years of age and over, 1912.**—The results of the Census taken in 1911 shew the percentage of male and female employees (i.e., persons "in receipt of wages or salary," and persons "unemployed"), 20 years of age and over, on the total male and female population. Applying these percentages to the estimated total male and female population in 1912, the estimated number of adult employees of each sex in 1912 may be obtained.

The following table shews separately for males and females and for each State (a) the number of members of trade unions, (b) the estimated total number of employees of each sex, 20 years of age and over, in all professions, trades, and occupations, and (c) the percentage of the former (a) on the latter (b). It should be pointed out that the estimated total number of employees comprises all persons (over the age specified) in receipt of wages or salary, as well as those unemployed; the estimate therefore includes a large number of adults who are either not eligible at all for membership of any trade union (such as certain persons employed in professional occupations) or who, while eligible for membership in so far as the nature of their trade or occupation is

concerned, do not reside in a locality which is covered by any union embracing the particular trade or occupation followed. It is also proper to observe that the age at which persons are eligible for membership varies in different unions. The Census results are classified in quinquennial age groups, and the sum of the groups 20 years of age and over is taken as more closely approximating to the average age of admission to membership than that of any other groups.

**Percentage of Male and Female Members of Unions on Estimated Total Number of Male and Female Employees, 20 years of Age and over, in all Professions Trades, and Occupations, 1912.**

MALES.

Particulars.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'land.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	C'wth.
No. of Members of Unions . .	185,524	109,860	44,139	35,258	32,299	8,474	415,554
Estimated Total No. of Employees 20 yrs. of age and over	368,444	249,806	132,242	80,631	78,898	34,578	944,599
Percent. of Members on Estimated Total No. Employees	50.35	43.98	33.38	43.73	40.94	24.51	43.99

FEMALES.

No. of Members of Unions . .	7,102	6,097	629	2,078	983	181	17,070
Estimated Total No. of Employees 20 yrs. of age and over	74,891	75,055	23,927	17,510	11,595	7,235	210,213
Percent. of Members on Estimated Total No. Employees	9.48	8.92	2.63	11.87	8.48	2.50	8.41

As regards males, it may be seen that the percentage of members of trade unions on the estimated total number of employees, 20 years of age and over, ranges from 24.51 in Tasmania to over 50 in New South Wales, the proportion for the whole Commonwealth being just on 44 per cent. The percentage of female members is, of course, much lower, viz., 8.41 for the whole Commonwealth; it is again lowest in Tasmania (2.5 per cent.), but is highest in South Australia (11.87 per cent.).

**8. Development of Trade Unions in Australia, 1891 to 1912.—**

The following table shews for the years specified the total number of trade unions in the Commonwealth, and the number and membership of those unions for which returns are available. The estimated total membership of all unions is shewn in the last line. The number of unions specified is the sum of the number of separate unions represented in the several States, no deduction having been made for inter-State excess. (See paragraph 5 hereinbefore.)

The figures given do not include particulars of comparatively small and unimportant unions which were in existence prior to the year 1912, but which, by that year, had either become amalgamated with other unions or had been disbanded or become defunct. Particulars for the more important unions in existence prior to 1912, but not in existence in that year, have, however, been included in all cases where possible. The actual returns received at this Bureau from trade unions have, in some instances, where memberships for past years were not given, been supplemented from particulars published by the State Registrars of Trade Unions.

**Number and Membership of Trade Unions in Commonwealth, 1891 to 1912.**

Particulars.	1891.	1896	1901.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
Total Number of Unions ..	124	134	198	302	323	378	419	482	573	621
No. of Unions for which membership available ..	72	83	139	253	286	334	375	442	542	621
Membership of these Unions	31,871	34,108	68,218	147,049	172,310	212,483	244,747	277,047	344,999	433,224
Estimated Total Membership of all Unions	54,888	65,066	97,174	175,529	194,602	240,475	300,184	302,119	364,732	433,224

These figures shew that while the number of unions in 1912 was just over five times the number in <sup>1891</sup>~~1901~~, the estimated membership during the same period increased nearly 8 times. During the last six years the estimated annual increase in membership was greatest in the year 1912, when it amounted to no less than 68,492, and least in 1910, when it was only 1985.

The present tendency of the trade union movement in Australia is towards "closer unionism," generally by the organisation of the workers in two or more States into inter-State or federated unions, and by the grouping together of trades or industries more or less closely allied. Particulars are not available for past years as to the number of separate organisations in the Commonwealth, that is, allowing for inter-State excess in the enumeration of unions within each State (see page 9.) It appears certain, however, that the number of separate organisations and inter-State groups of organisations in the Commonwealth has, in view of the tendency referred to, increased to a less extent than the figures in the above table indicate.\* It is expected that in future years this tendency will be clearly reflected in the returns in which deductions will be made for inter-State excess.

**9. Classifications of Unions in Commonwealth according to Number of Members, 1912.**—The subjoined table shows the number and membership of all trade unions in the Commonwealth in 1912, classified according to size. In this table inter-State unions are, of course, only counted once (see page 9 hereinbefore).

\*On page 9 it is shown that the number of separate organisations and interstate groups of organisations in the Commonwealth in 1912 was 408, compared with 621, the sum of the separate unions in the several States.

**Classification of Unions in Commonwealth according to Number of Members, 1912.**

Classification.	10,000 and over.	5,000 and under 10,000.	2,000 and under 5,000.	1,000 and under 2,000.	500 and under 1,000.	300 and under 500.	200 and under 300.	100 and under 200.	50 and under 100.	Under 50.	Total.
Number of Unions	7	15	26	43	32	32	39	67	72	75	408
Membership	132,335	99,718	79,674	60,558	22,585	12,234	6,483	9,323	5,106	2,263	433,242

It may be seen that the seven largest unions (in the group 10,000 and over) comprise 132,335, or no less than 30.5 per cent. of the total membership of all unions, while the next group (5000 and under 10,000) comprises 99,718 members, or 23.0 per cent. It appears probable that the tendency towards "closer unionism" will accentuate this centralisation in the larger organisations in future years.

**10. Number and Membership of Interstate or Federated Unions, 1912.**—Reference has already been made to the present tendency towards closer unionism. The following table gives particulars as to the number and membership of inter-State or federated unions in 1912:—

**Number and Membership of Interstate or Federated Unions in Commonwealth, 1912.**

Particulars.	Unions Operating in—					Total.
	2 States.	3 States.	4 States.	5 States.	6 States.	
Number of Unions	20	11	17	14	10	72
Number of Members	31,358	18,147	55,517	43,548	131,201	279,771

It appears, therefore, that 72 out of the 408 separate associations and groups of associations in the Commonwealth are organised on an inter-State basis. The membership of these 72 unions amounts to 279,771, or no less than 64.6 per cent. of the total membership (433,242) of all unions.

**11. Central Labour Organisations.**—In each of the metropolitan towns, as well as in a number of other industrial centres, delegate organisations, consisting of representatives from a group of trade unions, have been established. Their revenue is raised by means of a per capita tax on the members of each affiliated union. In most of the towns where such central organisations exist the majority of the local unions are affiliated with the central organisation, which is usually known as the Labour or the Trades Hall Council or the Labour Federation. In Queensland and Western Australia a unified system of organisation extends over the industrial centres throughout each State. In each of these States there is a provincial branch of the Australian Labour Federation, having a central council and executive, a metropolitan and branch district councils, to which the local bodies are



affiliated. The central council, on which all district councils are represented, meets periodically. In the other four States, however, the organisation is not so close, and though provision usually exists in the rules of the central council at the capital town of each State for the organisation of district councils or for the representation on the central council of the local councils in the smaller industrial centres of the State, the councils in each State are, as a matter of fact, independent bodies.

The table below shows the number of metropolitan and district or local labour councils, together with the number of unions and branches of unions affiliated therewith, in each State in February, 1913.

**Central Labour Organisations—Number and Unions Affiliated, 1913.**

Particulars.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'land.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	C'wth.
No. of Councils	3	4	2*	4	11	1.	25
Approximate No. of Unions and Branch Unions Affiliated	151	186	21	73	130	23	584

\* In addition two important unions are directly affiliated to the Provincial Council of the Australian Labour Federation.

The figures given in the above table as to number of unions do not necessarily represent separate unions, since the branches of a large union may be affiliated to the local trades councils in the several towns in which they are represented.

Between the trade union and the central organisation of unions may be classed certain State or district councils, organised on trade lines and composed of delegates from separate unions, the interests of the members of which are closely connected by reason of the occupations of their members, such, for example, as delegate councils of bakers, bread carters and mill employees, or of unions connected directly or indirectly with the iron, steel or brass trades, or with the building trades.