

## CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Christchurch, 10th April, 1912.

I have the honour to submit my report on the working of the Scaffolding Inspection Act in the North Canterbury district for the year ending the 31st March, 1912.

During the year just passed many fine buildings have been erected, or are in course of erection; the erection of residential dwellings also continues apace. The number of notices received of intention to erect scaffolding over the height of 16 ft. have been quite up to former years.

Careful inspection has been made of all ropes, ladders, scaffolding gear, guys, &c., and it has been necessary to condemn a number of ladders, ropes, &c., and to have scaffolding pulled down and re-erected where it has not been built in accordance with the Act.

There have been 10 accidents, 1 of them being fatal, and 2 others were very serious. The remaining 7 cases were not very serious, and necessitated the worker losing very short time. The fatal accident was caused by the fall of an old wall of a building which was being demolished to make room for a new building, and proper precautions were not taken to safeguard the workers. The other 2 serious cases happened by the fall of the same wall, 1 worker having a leg amputated, and the other being crushed. During the hearing of the claims for compensation it was shown that due precautions had not been made to shore the wall up during the process of removing a part of the bottom of the wall. I would respectfully suggest that an amendment should be passed, making provision for notification to the Inspector of the intention to pull down any old building, especially if built of brick or stone, as there is frequently more danger in the process of pulling down old buildings than in erecting new ones. I would again recommend that the Act make provision for increasing the depth in which scaffolding-poles are to be embedded in the ground from 12 in. to 24 in., as at the present time there is a danger of their falling when standing alone, either during the process of erection or of pulling down a scaffolding.

I also wish to again refer to my previous recommendation as to the necessity of debarring the use of guard ropes, and providing for timber or iron guard rails only.

I had occasion to make a suggestion to the Canterbury Builders Association *re* the danger of the use of batten ladders for hod-carriers, and at the invitation of the association I explained the danger of batten ladders on account of nails, &c., rusting away, and other minor matters; I was informed that my suggestions would be carried out. Perhaps it would be well if the Act prohibited the use of batten ladders for the use of hod-carriers, as when the hod is loaded there is great weight to be carried by the batten, and there is only a nail or two to hold it.

During the year just passed I made 1,091 visits of inspection to different scaffolding gear, &c., and had occasion to order the alteration of scaffolding in 120 cases, and to condemn altogether in 15 cases; I also condemned 20 ladders, 5 derricks, and 4 lifts. In the other 927 cases the scaffolding or gear was erected in accordance with the Act. I had occasion to recommend 3 prosecutions of builders for failing to notify me of their intention to erect scaffolding above the height of 16 ft.; these cases were taken before the Court, and judgment was given in favour of the Department in each case, the penalties amounting to £3. I made inspection of scaffolding at Islington, Ashburton, Rangiora, Amberley, and surrounding districts of Christchurch. I also made some inspections under the Shearers and Farm Labourers' Accommodation Act, and as to a number of breaches of awards, accidents in factories, &c.

I have, &amp;c.,

EDWIN J. G. STRINGER,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

## TIMARU.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Timaru, 29th April, 1912.

As Inspector of Scaffolding for South Canterbury, I have the honour to submit my report on the operation of the Scaffolding Inspection Act, 1908, during the year ending 31st March, 1912.

The building trade has been very busy, and a large number of substantial buildings have been erected, several are at present in course of erection, and others are likely to be built in the near future. There has been a large number of cottages and villas erected.

During the period under review I have paid 183 visits of inspection to 85 buildings and 6 ships. On the whole, I must say there is a decided improvement in the construction of scaffolds. I have had cause to partially condemn 3 scaffolds, and in each case these have immediately been put right under my instructions. Some 30 ladders have been condemned, as either not being according to regulations or being worn out, and I would strongly recommend that an Inspector should be empowered to order the destruction of any plant that does not comply with the regulations, as I have more than once found a ladder in use that I had previously condemned on another job; and in one case a ladder that I had ordered not to be used I found had been sold to another contractor. Four accidents have been reported, the only serious one causing a broken leg; the others were of a trivial nature.

One prosecution for failing to give notice of intention to erect scaffolding has been taken, and a penalty, with costs, was inflicted.

I have, &amp;c.,

GEORGE H. LIGHTFOOT,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.