

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Christchurch, 12th April, 1906.

I respectfully submit my report on the general working and carrying-out of the different awards and agreements under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act for the Canterbury Industrial District for the year ending the 31st March, 1906.

I have made investigations into 216 cases reported by secretaries of unions and others. Most of these proved to be without foundation or were very trivial cases, which were in many instances simply neglect on the part of the foreman, book-keeper, or others, and were rectified at once; forty-one cases were more serious, and were principally the result of carelessness or indifference on the part of the employers, who were, however, anxious to correct matters at once by paying arrears of wages amounting in the aggregate to £423 19s. 2d. It was also found necessary to file twenty-six informations against twenty-one employers and six against workers; these are waiting to be heard by the Court. The cases cover the Districts of Christchurch, Ashburton, Chertsey, Rangiora, Oxford, Cust, and Kaiapoi.

During the year thirty-two cases were adjudicated upon, of these convictions were obtained in twenty-nine cases, two were dismissed, and one withdrawn. The penalties amounted to £66 10s., and arrears of wages ordered to be paid amounted to £163 17s. 7d.

I am very pleased to be able to say that the Act is working very smoothly, and that very few cases of wilful breaches come to light, most of the employers being very anxious to comply with the law.

The principal offences committed by employers is failure to indenture apprentices, and omitting to pay increases when due to youths and others working under a sliding scale as to age or capability.

An erroneous impression prevails amongst a large number of workers and employers that an agreement has the same force as an award in respect to binding those employers commencing in business subsequent to the agreement being come to, and also that it is binding on all workers, non-members of unions in the employ of employers bound by agreements.

I have informed union officials and employers that where agreements are in force, they can, if they so desire, have them made into awards by making proper application to the Court through the Clerk of Awards, without the necessity of waiting for the Court to sit in the particular locality, as when the employers and employees agree to same the Court will make an order almost as once, whatever part of the colony it is in, thus saving valuable time.

Advantage has been taken of the regulations of the Arbitration Court to apply for interpretation of the various awards or orders; these interpretations have been given by the Court expeditiously, thereby settling some knotty points, saving valuable time, and removing friction as between employer and employees.

I think provision should be made either by Act or by order of the Court providing that where special concessions are granted by the Court to any particular trade or business and where a change in the managership or sale of business takes place, that such concession should apply to the new firm or company, providing the business is generally carried on in the same manner as heretofore. This would obviate the necessity of proceedings being taken against them as subsequent parties.

I have, &amp;c.,

W. H. HAGGER,

Inspector of Factories.

Edward Tregear, Esq., Chief Inspector.

## DUNEDIN.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Dunedin, 13th April, 1906.

I have the honour to place before you a report of matters coming within the jurisdiction of this branch of the Department for the year now terminated.

## GENERAL.

In reviewing the conditions of the skilled trades and industries that come within the scope of this report it is pleasing to note that the vast majority of trades have been exceedingly busy during the year. In some instances it has been somewhat difficult to keep pace with the demand. This has been notably so in respect to certain branches in the building trade. Those engaged in this industry (with the exception of stonemasons) have been kept in constant employment. One of the contributing causes to the success and stability in these trades is the fact that there has been an increased demand for a better class of workers' homes and middle-class houses. Suburban land that had hitherto remained unoccupied has been cut up into building allotments, and aided by the electric-tram system, together with the facilities of obtaining money at reasonable rates of interest, these lands have been purchased as building-sites, and up-to-date dwellings have been erected. This development has also aided other trades; the furniture trades in particular have benefited by this expansion.

In the clothing and boot-manufacturing trades the output has been well up to the average, and the employment of these two classes of workers has been steady and regular. There is no doubt that the effect of large importations of certain classes of goods has hampered the operations of manufacturers. And it seems almost an impossible task to educate the general public to the advantages of supporting local industries of this character in a practical manner.

The coachbuilding trades are in a very unsatisfactory and languishing condition. In this trade there has been a great dearth of employment, and there exists a feeling amongst employers and employees that some remedial measures must be taken if this industry is to be saved from falling into decay altogether. Of course the introduction of electric, traction, and other fresh means of locomotion that have come into existence during the past few years has materially retarded this industry; but it is generally understood that the most potent factor in the depression lies in the amount of imported American goods which are displacing the product of the colonial artisan.