

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Auckland, 1st April, 1908

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending the 31st March, 1908.

Since my last year's report I have made, on an average, 112 visits per month for the first six months of the year, and the remaining six months average 140 visits per month.

There has been very little friction in the working of the Act during the year, and a few warnings for failing to send the required notice have been sufficient to make things run smoothly.

I am pleased to report that since the Act came into force in my district the gear for scaffolding owned by the principal builders has been entirely renewed, and the smaller scaffoldings used on wooden buildings have been vastly improved.

The Amendment Act of 1907 I consider will be a great improvement to "The Scaffolding Act, 1906," when it is in full working-order, especially in reference to ladders and the boarding-over of joists; also section 2, subsection (1), which empowers the Inspectors to have control over any scaffold.

PROSECUTIONS.

Only 2 charges have been made during the year under the Act. In each case a conviction was obtained. These cases were brought for failing to give notice of intention to erect scaffolding.

ACCIDENTS.

I am pleased to inform you that only two scaffolding accidents have occurred in this district; both of them happened from scaffolding that was under the regulation height. Another accident occurred at Gisborne (my extended district), and this was caused through a ladder slipping while the man was descending from the scaffold.

GISBORNE.

I visited Gisborne at the end of February, and made 18 inspections of different scaffoldings in the district. Some of them were erected considerably below the standard regulations. I gave directions to the contractors as to what alterations were required, and my requests were complied with.

In conclusion, I beg to state that the building trade here is still carried on in a very large scale. Seven and eight story buildings are in course of construction at the present time.

Yours, &c.,

HUGH GRESHAM,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.

CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Christchurch, 4th April, 1908.

I have the honour to submit for your perusal my report on the working of the Scaffolding Inspection Act of 1906 for the year ending 31st March, 1908.

The year has been a very busy one, and building operations have been continuous, necessitating frequent visits. With the exception that some contractors have omitted to report their intention to erect scaffolding, no serious breaches of the law have been made. Contractors have been compelled to adhere strictly to the law in respect to providing the necessary materials, &c., and, in consequence, most of the contractors have now gear fit for any class of scaffolding. Some few of the contractors mentioned did endeavour at first to make shift with inferior material, such as perished ropes and sprung timber, and ladders with rotten rungs. It was necessary, therefore, to condemn as unfit for use this sort of material, and I am pleased to say that contractors now take a pride in their scaffolds, and, in fact, take more notice of them than they ever did before.

I am very glad to report also that, as a result of the care and attention in the erection of scaffolding and the safeguarding of the workers employed thereon, no accidents have happened. This is very gratifying, seeing the number of accidents that happened prior to the Scaffolding Inspection Act coming into force, showing clearly the necessity for its existence. I might say that the employees on buildings recognise the beneficial effect of good scaffolding, and many who formerly refused to work on high buildings now have no fear.

The extension of the district entailed an increased amount of work, and I have made several visits to such towns as Ashburton, Timaru, Temuka, Waimate, Geraldine, Rangiora, and Kaiapoi; and, as I am notified of any important buildings being erected in the district, I am able to pay flying visits where necessary.

The amendments of last session have considerably extended the scope of the Act, and whereas formerly only scaffolding over 16 ft. in height came under the jurisdiction of the inspection, now all scaffolding has to be inspected.

During the year I made 1,933 visits to various buildings where scaffolding was in use, and in 349 cases it was necessary for some slight alteration to be made, such as fixing the poles closer together, affixing guard-rails, putting putlogs closer together and wedging same, also bracing the scaffolding.

There were 103 scaffolds condemned as totally unsafe for use. I gave directions for these to be pulled down and reconstructed.

Thirty-two ladders were also condemned as unsafe for use on account of being sprung or the material perished.

In 3 cases where derricks were in use it was necessary to condemn the rope gear as being unsuitable and dangerous for the purposes for which it was being used.