

I still have serious doubts as to the safety, under certain circumstances, of the iron scaffolding-brackets very generally in use. The sudden dropping by a careless workman of heavy material on to the staging might lead to serious consequences. My attention was recently drawn to a case where the coach-screw of $\frac{3}{4}$ in. malleable cast iron had snapped off close to the collar, and I am still of opinion that these bolts should be made of wrought iron, in order to minimise any possible element of danger to workmen.

I also look with disfavour on red-pine ladders, and much prefer ladders built of white-pine, Oregon, or kauri, as being longer in the grain and more springy.

With respect to rope guard-rails on high buildings, there is danger of a worker relying on them too much, as it is impossible to keep them taut, and they are rather a trap than a safeguard. I think all guard-rails should be of not less than 3 in. by 2 in. timber.

It has been necessary to take proceedings against three contractors for failing to report their intention to erect scaffolding, and conviction was obtained in each case.

I have, &c.,

EDWIN J. G. STRINGER,
Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.

DUNEDIN.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Dunedin, 15th April, 1908.

The following is a report of the work done by me during the past year under "The Scaffolding Inspection Act, 1906."

From 1st April, 1907, I have made various visits to 526 scaffolds on the different buildings which have been erected in Otago and Southland, principally in Dunedin and suburbs. I have had occasion to direct that alterations be made in 99 different cases. These alterations comprise a number of defects, principally the use of insufficient braces or perished ropes. I have condemned several ladders as being unsafe, and in every case the same have been destroyed.

I am pleased to be able to state that the Act has had a very beneficial effect in Dunedin and suburbs district, and all classes in the building trades recognise the necessity of erecting scaffolds that will comply with the provisions of the Act.

In Invercargill, which I visited 5 times during the year, I have experienced considerable difficulty in inducing the builders to comply with the regulations, as for a number of years the scaffolds used have been of a very flimsy character; but on the occasion of my last two visits I noticed a considerable improvement. I believe that the same has been brought about by the prosecutions by the Department against two Invercargill builders in October last.

On the 21st June, 1907, I visited Oamaru. The scaffolding in use at that time was very well constructed, and was entirely in accordance with the regulations. This was the only visit made to this town during the year.

Since the 1st April, 1907, 4 prosecutions were brought by the Department against three different firms.

During the year I have received 85 notices of intention to erect scaffolding.

I am pleased to be able to state that during the period under review there have been no accidents to record, and that everything is being done by the building trades generally to work harmoniously with the Department for the furtherance of safety to workmen and for the proper administration of the Act.

In conclusion, I would suggest that a penalty clause be added to clause 5 of the principal Act, for the following reason: In many cases in districts outside Dunedin builders erect a hap-hazard scaffold on the chance of the Inspector not visiting same till building is completed. On several occasions in Southland I have seen scaffolding which I considered unsafe after it has been too late to have it altered. I therefore think that if there was a penalty clause for breach of the regulations it would prevent country builders from taking that chance.

Yours, &c.,

F. BARTON,
Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.