

REPORTS FROM INSPECTORS OF SCAFFOLDING.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Auckland, 13th April, 1910.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending 31st March, 1910.

The Act is working very smoothly, and the employers carry out any suggestions or additions that are ordered without any friction.

The year has been very satisfactory in regard to the building trade, with the exception of the winter months, when everything was quiet.

At the present moment business looks brisk, there being nine large contracts proceeding, which will continue well over the coming winter.

In the outer districts the erection of buildings of any height has not been so extensive, and only one visit has been made to Cambridge, Ngaruawahia, Hamilton, and Gisborne during the year. In each case the scaffoldings used could be classed as satisfactory.

In the Auckland suburbs house-building has been plentiful during the year, and shows no signs of easing off. Several two-storied wooden buildings are at present in course of erection.

I have to report that during the year I made 1,107 visits to scaffoldings, and received 225 notices to inspect. Several of the buildings required scaffolding for the greater part of the year.

Six scaffoldings were condemned as unsafe and were reconstructed, but the principal alterations necessary on the ordinary scaffoldings were: Erecting of guard-rails, fender-boards, and wider platforms, the latter on carpenters' scaffoldings.

I do think that if the rope guard-rail was done away with it would be a good thing, for unless it is kept continually tightened up it is quite useless. In every case where possible I have had wooden rails erected.

Eight ladders were condemned and either destroyed or taken off the works.

PROSECUTIONS.

It was necessary to proceed against 8 employers for failing to notify their intention to erect. With the exception of 1 case which was dismissed, convictions and fines were obtained.

Sixteen letters of warning were given to different builders for not sending the required notice, the breach having been committed unintentionally, or during the employer's absence.

ACCIDENTS.

In the course of erection of buildings 20 accidents occurred, 2 proving fatal—one being an employer who fell from the top of a building while replacing corrugated iron, and the second through an employee tripping against a plank of the platform causing it to move to one side, with the result that he fell through on to a concrete floor below.

The remaining 18 were only slight accidents, such as cut fingers, bruised ribs, and strains.

In conclusion, I may state that there is every prospect for a busy winter in the building trade in Auckland.

I have, &c.,

HUGH GRESHAM,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 25th April, 1910.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st March, 1910.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Scaffolding Inspection Act is now working smoothly. Very little friction is being experienced with builders and others concerned, and much less trouble than formerly is found in getting the Act and regulations strictly complied with.

I think the great improvement in the material used, and the methods adopted in erecting and maintaining scaffolding not only in my district, but all over the Dominion, since the coming into force of the Act, must be considered very satisfactory, and the small number of accidents that occurred last year considering the large number of workmen employed compares very favourably with other occupations of a hazardous nature.

I still think that a penalty clause, as suggested before, should be added to the Act in connection with clause 5—to provide for the prosecution of persons erecting scaffolding which is not in accordance with the regulations, on the chance of an Inspector not seeing it.

During the year 341 notices of intention to erect scaffolding were received. This is about half the number of structures inspected, as only those over 16 ft. in height require to be notified. This is a slight falling-off from the number last year—no doubt owing to slackness of trade. In many cases alterations and additions were necessary, and in 27 cases the whole structure was condemned as unsafe and ordered to be put out of use.

A large number of ladders were condemned during the year. Ladders are often made in a very temporary manner by workmen to suit some small job, and afterwards used for other work for which they are not suitable, until they are condemned by an Inspector. Small items such as these require continuous supervision.