

In conclusion, I beg to state that, with few exceptions, builders and contractors have readily complied with any request I have made to carry out any alteration, and my thanks are due to all those with whom my duties have brought me in contact for the courtesy and consideration extended to me.

I have, &c.,

HENRY E. MOSTON,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.

CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Christchurch, 20th April, 1910.

I have the honour to report on the working of the Scaffolding Inspection Act for the year ending 31st March, 1910.

The year has been an uneventful one, inasmuch as there have been very few large public buildings erected in this district. There have been, however, a fair proportion of fairly large business premises erected. The amount of work entailed in inspection, however, has not decreased, as a large number of cottage and residential buildings have been erected in the outlying districts, which necessitated many miles of travel when visits of inspection were made.

No difficulties have arisen in the performance of my duties, although I have closely inspected the many scaffolds erected, and also the usual gear used for such purposes, including ladders, ropes, hauling-gear, blocks, &c., and it has been my duty on many occasions to condemn gear which I thought was unsafe for use, and to also condemn scaffolding which was in use, and which was not built in accordance with the Act, even going so far as to direct that no workmen were to make use of such until the scaffolding was so altered as to comply with the Act and its requirements.

I have been particularly careful to see that guard-rails were erected on all scaffolding above the height of 16 ft., as in my experience most of the accidents have happened through men missing their footing and having nothing to grasp.

Due regard has been paid also to the matter of careful wedging of putlocks, to prevent high scaffolding from falling away from the building, and also as to the proper method of splicing upright poles together. Although most of the big builders seem ready to comply with the requirements of the Act, and rely in a large measure on the Inspector to see that the scaffolding is properly erected, there are those, however, who need a lot of looking after to prevent them from erecting shoddy scaffolding, using perished ropes, &c.

I would again point out the danger of allowing the use of rope for guard-rails, and would strongly recommend that all guard-rails should be of timber of not less than 3 in. by 2 in., and these rails lashed or nailed inside of the uprights of the scaffolding, in order to stand the strain better than if they were fastened on the outside. As I mentioned in my last year's report, there is great difficulty in keeping ropes properly taut on account of the variations of the weather. I would recommend that some provision should be made by which all tall ladders in use on high buildings should be lashed or fastened by a rope from high up on the building, as many fatal accidents have occurred through drivers of carts or runaway horses carrying away the foot of the ladder. If they were fastened as mentioned, the men would have at least a small chance to hang on and to save themselves.

During the year I received 587 notices from builders and contractors of their intention to erect scaffolding over the height of 16 ft. In every instance I made an inspection of the scaffold.

I also made periodical visits around the whole district to see that the law was being properly complied with. Altogether 1,057 visits were made to the various contracts.

On 6 different contracts the whole of the rope slings were condemned. On 24 contracts ladders were condemned. On 6 contracts the scaffolding-cords were condemned. One swinging stage was condemned. Three sets of trestles were condemned. Forty-four scaffolds were condemned as unfit for men to work upon. Slight alterations were ordered in 183 cases. Four rope-falls used for hoisting gear were condemned as being unfit to carry the weight they were being used for. A large number of scaffolding-poles were condemned and destroyed, as the life of these poles varies very much according to the time of year they are cut.

During the year 8 accidents were reported, none of them fatal.

I found it necessary to report to you and take proceedings against 6 contractors for failing to give written notice of their intention to erect scaffolding over the height of 16 ft. In some instances very shoddy scaffolding was used, and was quite unfit for men to work upon. Penalties were imposed in all cases.

I have, &c.,

EDWIN J. G. STRINGER,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.

TIMARU.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Timaru, 19th April, 1910.

In addition to reporting on the inspection of factories and shops, awards, &c., I have the honour to report on the working of the Scaffolding Inspection Act in South Canterbury during the year.

The building trade has been very quiet indeed during the past year, but there now seems to be signs of revival.

During the year I have paid 104 visits to scaffolding on 59 buildings and 3 ships. I have found the scaffolding very well constructed on the whole, and only minor alterations have been necessary, and these have always been made as soon as attention was called to the matter.