

men engaged on a single plank 10 in. wide and 30 ft. in height from the ground; the standards supporting this platform were 3 in. by 1½ in., and to obtain the desired length one piece was nailed to the side of another with a 12 in. lap. No guard rails were provided, and not only did the scaffolding fail to come within the requirements of the Act, but it was considered positively dangerous to human life. Several of the Inspectors urge that power should be given by the Act to order the complete destruction of any gear found, whether in use or not—tressels, ladders, &c.—that are considered to be unsafe for use. The Inspectors may from time to time condemn any material that is being used, but as a further protection against its further use it is suggested that power should be given for unsafe gear, ladders, &c., to be destroyed in the presence of an Inspector.

The accidents reported under the Act total 118 (last year 126), and the following table classifies them according to their severity:—

District.	Slight.	Moderate.	Serious.	Fatal.	Total.
Northern	48	4	2	2	56
Taranaki	1	1	..	..	2
Wellington	35	5	2	..	42
Canterbury	15	1	1	..	17
Otago and Southland ..	1	..	..	..	1
Totals	100	11	5	2	118

Nearly 85 per cent. of the accidents were slight—that is, necessitating very little loss of employment. There were two fatal accidents, as against five last year. These were sustained by a labourer engaged in bridge-construction who slipped and fell from a height of 42 ft., and by another labourer who stepped through an opening provided for a lift-well and was precipitated to the floor, a distance of 65 ft. The steady decrease in the number and seriousness of accidents occurring under the Act is a pleasing tribute to the careful administration of the Act by our several Inspectors.

PROSECUTIONS.

There were twenty-six cases taken before the Court under the Act for the following offences:—

	Number of Offences.
Failing to notify Inspector of intention to erect scaffolding over 16 ft. in height	23
Permitting use of ladder which did not extend at least 5 ft. beyond the level to which such ladder was intended to afford access	2
For failing to make provision to the satisfaction of the Inspector of Scaffolding for the protection of workmen and others employed on or in the vicinity of a building in course of erection	1

In this case the evidence showed that the defendant had been notified by the Inspector to provide proper and sufficient protection from accident for his workmen. The building was being erected under the supervision of defendant's foreman, and the Court held that defendant was responsible for the omission of his servant to have the Inspector's instructions carried out. The Court further held that it would appear to have been the duty of the Inspector to give the defendant some idea of what was required to make the scaffolding safe to his satisfaction; nevertheless that merely providing loose boards on the floor of the building, leaving it to the workers to spread the boards so as to avoid accident, was not sufficient compliance with the requirements of the Act.

Out of the twenty-six cases taken before the Court one was dismissed. In this case the Magistrate held that as the definition of "gear" in the Act includes ladders, planks, hangers, &c., the combination of these materials would not come under the definition of "scaffolding." Therefore no notice was required to be sent to the Inspector before the erection.

SHEARERS' AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

Compared with last year fewer stations were visited by Inspectors in regard to the accommodation provided for shearers under the above Act. In the aggregate, however, a considerable amount of inspection was done. Of the 353 stations actually inspected during the year, 268 were found to have satisfactory accommodation, and the remaining 85 stations had either full accommodation to provide or extensive alterations to make. A return on page 90 at the end of this report gives particulars of the inspections made and the alterations, &c., necessary to comply