

REPORTS FROM INSPECTORS OF SCAFFOLDING.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Auckland, 22nd April, 1913.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending the 31st March, 1913.

The building trade for the first nine months of the year was very brisk in all its branches, and most employers found it necessary to pay above the award rate of wages in order to secure hands. During the latter three months, however, a considerable amount of suburban building has eased off, consequently more men are available for the larger buildings which are being erected in the city, and which require a large quantity of scaffolding. Trade for the ensuing year is likely to remain steady, several large buildings having just been commenced which will not be completed within eight months.

During the year I have visited Te Kuiti, Taumarunui, Frankton, Hamilton, Cambridge, Whangarei, Thames, Morrinsville, Pukekohe, Gisborne, and Huntly, where many buildings requiring scaffoldings have been erected. Many of these scaffoldings had to be altered, and when time permitted I waited to see the alterations carried out.

During the twelve months 366 notices have been received from contractors of their intention to erect scaffoldings exceeding 16 ft. in height. 940 visits have been made to these scaffoldings, and many other smaller buildings were also visited. Several builders who had failed to send the necessary notice before erecting received strong letters of warning, as they were in most cases employers who had just commenced contracting. Six scaffoldings and a quantity of gear were condemned as unsafe for the use of workmen.

ACCIDENTS.

Fifty-six accidents have been reported as having occurred on buildings in course of erection, repair, or structural alterations. The majority of these were slight. One case proved fatal, in which a man at Frankton fell a distance of 65 ft. through an opening used for hauling up material.

For failing to report accidents 4 builders were cautioned.

PROSECUTIONS.

For failing to send notice to the Inspector of their intention to erect scaffolding exceeding 16 ft. in height 3 builders were prosecuted. A conviction was recorded and fine imposed in each case.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to those persons connected with the building trade with whom I have come into contact, and who have assisted me in making the Scaffolding Inspection Act run smoothly.

I have, &c.,

HUGH GRESHAM,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

NAPIER.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Napier, 21st April, 1913.

I have the honour to submit my report on the administration of the Act in this district for the year ending the 31st March, 1913.

Since the date of my appointment here last October 40 notices of intention to erect scaffolding have been received from various parts of the Hawke's Bay district. Thirty visits of inspection have been made, and in most instances it was found that the law had been fully observed. In one instance a ladder was condemned; in another ladders had to be lengthened and guard-rails put round the platform; and in one case I had to insist on the joists in the middle floor of a building being properly covered with boards, in order to protect workmen overhead from serious injuries in the event of a fall.

There was 1 serious accident during the period, which occurred through the total collapse of gantry and scaffolding from the front of an hotel in Napier. Fortunately all the workmen escaped uninjured, but a young lady who was passing along the street at the time was knocked down by the falling timber and seriously injured on the body and head. The injured lady is still weak as a result of the injuries she received. The cause of the accident has been ascribed to the sinking of the footpath, which had been weakened by the excavation of large cellars underneath the building, combined with the fact that the ground foundation became very soft through heavy rain.

I noted that in a number of instances builders were using the Humphries patent brackets for scaffolding purposes in lieu of standards. This system of bolting iron triangles to the face of a building obviates the necessity of erecting poles in standards, and can be erected much quicker. The patent is considered safe, provided it is properly tested before working operations are commenced. Contractors were somewhat careless about putting guard rails round the platforms on this patent, and in consequence I have issued instructions that the usual precautions must be taken to safeguard the workmen employed on the patent.

I have, &c.,

JOHN JACKSON,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.