

amendment also needed is to provide a better means of enforcing the regulations so that a prosecution could immediately follow a deliberate breach. At the present time a prosecution can not ensue until after the Inspector has given instructions to make the required alterations or additions to what is sometimes dangerous scaffolding or gear; it has often happened that temporary scaffolding of an unsafe description has been hastily erected for the purpose of doing some work on the chance that the Inspector would not discover it nor visit the place until the job was finished and the unsafe structure pulled down.

During the year 304 notices of intention to erect scaffolding were received. With a few exceptions all the scaffolding was visited and inspected, and, of course, in some cases many visits were necessary. A large number of scaffolds required alterations or additions to be effected; the boarding over of open joists, the guarding of well-holes in floors, and the safety of ladders were matters that required continuous supervision.

Nine prosecutions were taken for failing to give notice of intention to erect scaffolding. In 7 cases fines were imposed, 1 case was dismissed, and 1 withdrawn.

Two builders were fined for permitting ladders to be used that did not extend to at least 5 ft. beyond the highest level to which such ladders were intended to afford access. These were the first cases taken under this provision. A builder in Napier was fined for failing to board over joists to the satisfaction of the Inspector, thereby causing risk of accident. During the course of a lengthy judgment the Magistrate held that the mere providing of loose boards on each floor of a building in course of erection, leaving it to the workers to spread the boards so as to avoid accident, was not sufficient compliance with subsection (2) of section 7.

Thirty-four accidents were reported under the Act, none of which were fatal. One of the most serious was to a man in Wellington who lost his right arm through its being crushed while he was stacking steel girders. The majority of the accidents was slight. Taking into consideration the large number of men engaged at the building trades and the dangerous nature of the employment the proportionately small number of accidents must be considered satisfactory.

In conclusion, I desire to express my thanks for the assistance, courtesy, and attention given by those with whom my duties have brought me into contact.

I have, &c.,

R. A. BOLLAND,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Nelson, 25th April, 1913.

I have the honour to submit for your consideration my report on the working of the Act for the year ending the 31st March, 1913.

The building trade has been good during the year, and visits of inspection have been made to various places where buildings were in course of erection. Twenty-eight notices of intention to erect scaffolding were received, and visits paid in each case. On the whole, there was a decided improvement in the manner of construction of scaffolding, and very few scaffolds have been condemned. I am sorry to say that as far as ladders are concerned there was little improvement, and 20 ladders have been condemned during the year. Carpenters were the worse offenders in this respect, and often the employees were more to blame than the employers.

It is pleasing to note that no accidents have occurred during the year, and this fact speaks fairly well for the class of scaffolding in use.

One prosecution was taken for failing to notify the Inspector of intention to erect scaffolding, and a conviction obtained.

I have, &c.,

S. TYSON,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

GREYMOUTH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Greymouth, 24th April, 1913.

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

Nine notices of intention to erect scaffolding over 16 ft. in height have been received.

Visits of inspection have been made to all buildings in course of erection or undergoing alteration or repair, and wherever it has been necessary to suggest improvement in the construction of any scaffold I have personally supervised the work thereof.

I have had occasion to condemn many trestles, ladders, and other gear used by workers on buildings, and as a further protection of life and limb I consider that Inspectors ought to be given power to order the destruction of such gear and to personally see this carried out.

There is one description of platform which is not within the definition of scaffolding, and which I respectfully submit should be, especially where constructed of timber. I refer to fire-escape platforms, and particularly the platforms running parallel to the face of wooden buildings. I have repeatedly seen these structures in quite a rotten condition, and unfit for use. If Inspectors were given power to condemn these platforms this undoubted evil would soon disappear.

The various builders throughout the district appeared to be fairly familiar with the provisions of this Act, and little difficulty was met with in the administration of it. There have been only two occasions throughout the year on which it has been necessary for the Department to prosecute for non-observance of the Act. These were for failing to give due notification of intention to erect scaffolding; in both instances convictions were obtained and fines ordered.