

No accident of any moment has been reported during the period.

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge the ready assistance and courtesy extended to me by the Inspector of Factories in country districts and by builders in the carrying-out of my duties.

I have, &c.,

H. J. TORBIT,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Christchurch, 18th April, 1913.

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

The year has been a busy one, and many large buildings have been erected, including the Government's new offices in Cathedral Square, which are nearly completed. Many old buildings have been pulled down and replaced by new and up-to-date structures. Altogether, a total of £261,000 has been expended in the erection of these buildings, including residences, but this sum does not include the Boroughs of Spreydon, Riccarton, Sumner, New Brighton, Lyttelton, nor any other areas outside Christchurch City.

During the year I received 536 notices from contractors of their intention to erect scaffolding over 16 ft. in height, and these necessitated frequent visits during erection. Many of the contracts carried out have been very large ones, and a considerable amount of scaffolding was needed to complete the work. There has been a general improvement during the period in the system of erection, and of the quality of material used for scaffolding, &c. It was necessary for me to take great care in seeing that the guard-rails, the lapping of boards, the fastening of ropes, splicing of poles, &c., were attended to, as these defects are sometimes responsible for workers meeting with accidents by tripping, &c. In 88 cases attention has been drawn to these classes of defects. Seventeen scaffolds were wholly condemned as being unfit for men to work upon. Four derricks and some gear were also condemned. Fifteen batten ladders were condemned as being unfit for the use to which they were put, some of them being rotten. A fair number of scaffolding-poles or uprights used for the purpose of carrying staging was also condemned on account of their showing weakness or decay. A close inspection has been made of all material used in the scaffolding.

Visits of inspection have been made to Ashburton, Rakaia, Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Oxford, Akaroa, Little River, Lyttelton, and the outlying districts of Christchurch.

Four accidents on or about buildings in course of erection were reported; one of them was of a serious nature—viz., the foreman of the new Government buildings fell from a distance of 40 ft., breaking his leg and several of his ribs. The other cases were not of a serious nature.

It has been necessary to take proceedings in 2 cases against employers for omitting to notify the Department of their intention to erect scaffolding over 16 ft. in height. Judgment was given in favour of the Department in each case, and penalties of £1 10s. were imposed.

It would tend to a more effective working of the Act if the regulations under the Act forbade the use of rope guard-rails, batten ladders, and malleable cast bracket-eyes, used for carpenters' scaffolding, and compelled builders to use nothing but wrought iron or steel. It is desirable also that the Act be extended, giving Inspectors more power to safeguard those workers engaged in demolishing walls, old buildings, &c.

During the year it was my duty to supervise the erection of six workers' dwellings, and on their completion general satisfaction was expressed by the purchasers. It was also my duty to supervise all repair work in connection with 51 workers' dwellings in this district. The additional work in connection with this Act entailed additional responsibilities, and a large amount of overtime work was essential for the carrying-out of my various duties.

I have, &c.,

EDWIN J. G. STRINGER,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

TIMARU.

SIR,—

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

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

The building trade has been very brisk, but there was a marked falling-off towards the close of the year.

I received 41 notices of intention to erect scaffolding, and all the scaffolds in connection with these have been visited, in most cases several times. I have also paid numerous visits to smaller buildings with scaffolding under 16 ft. in height, in which cases notices were not required to be sent to me.

There has been a marked improvement in the class of scaffolding used on the larger buildings, but there were several instances where I had to request that alterations be made. The scaffolds on the larger buildings have been erected in accordance with the requirements of the Act, competent scaffolders were employed, and, as a rule, the men were very careful to see that every attention was given to the safety of the scaffold.

There have been 13 accidents reported under the Act during the year; none of them was of a very serious nature, the worst being the fracture of a small bone in the right foot. On one