

occasion a portion of a scaffolding collapsed, and precipitated 4 men to the ground, but fortunately none was seriously injured. I had visited this scaffolding two days prior to the accident, and after my visit another height of scaffolding had been erected by an inexperienced person in an improper way, and consequently as soon as the men commenced work it gave way under them.

In conclusion, I would like to indorse the suggestion made by the Inspector of Scaffolding, Wellington, in his last year's report, that the Act should be amended by reducing the height of scaffolding in connection with which notice is required to be sent to the Inspector before erection. I consider this most necessary, as competent scaffolders are not usually employed on small buildings, and great carelessness is frequently shown in the erection of scaffolding in such cases. Very frequently the Inspector has not an opportunity of seeing it until it is practically completed.

I must also express my thanks to the police constables acting as Inspectors of Factories in this district for their courtesy and assistance given me in carrying out my duties under this Act.

I have, &c.,

GEO. H. LIGHTFOOT,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

DUNEDIN.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Dunedin, 26th April, 1913.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the operations of the Act for the year ended the 31st March, 1913.

During the period under review a considerable amount of scaffolding has been in use, principally on those buildings which were under construction last year. This fact accounts for the comparatively small number of new notices of intention to erect scaffolding exceeding 16 ft. in height which have been received during the year—viz., 68. In addition to the above, I have received a considerable number of notices *re* scaffolding which did not attain the height of 16 ft. Of these I have kept no record.

The number of buildings visited during the year was 182, to which 634 visits have been paid. Included in this are several extensive buildings. The whole of the scaffolding in the district has been erected and maintained in a satisfactory manner, and I am pleased to report that no accidents have occurred on any building in course of erection during the whole of the year.

On 114 different occasions I have found it necessary to call the attention of builders to defects and omissions in providing proper facilities for the safety of workmen. The most notable cause for complaint has been defective ladders. Ladders were taken on to a job in good order, but after a while in use they began to get out of repair, and no effort seems to have been made to put them into order until the Inspector complained, when the necessary repairs were executed. Some builders were worse than others in this connection, but all were to some extent remiss in providing for the proper maintenance of ladders.

Another source of trouble was the neglect on employers' part to provide guard-rails around lift and stair wells and other openings in floors, and, although in some cases guard-rails were fixed, they were frequently taken away for some purpose or other and not replaced. I am continually complaining to some contractors of this practice, and they in their turn pass the blame on to the workers. Other defects noticed have been the bad tying of ropes, insufficient braces, and here and there a defective pole or ledger.

A fair amount of work has been done in the country districts around Dunedin during the year, and I am sorry to say that the knowledge of scaffolding possessed by the employers engaged in the work has been mostly of a rudimentary character. I have consequently been required to exercise a considerable amount of supervision over them.

It has been found necessary to prosecute 3 builders during the year for failing to notify the Inspector of their intention to erect scaffolding over 16 ft. in height, and in all cases penalties were inflicted.

In conclusion, I beg to record my satisfaction at the desire shown on the part of both employer and employee to carry out the provisions of the Act, also the willingness with which any instructions given by the Inspector have been complied with.

I have, &c.,

F. BARTON,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary of Labour, Wellington.

INVERCARGILL.

SIR,—

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

I have the honour to submit my report on the work done under the Act in the Southland District for the year ending the 31st March, 1913.

Twenty-eight notices to erect scaffolding were received. The total number is slightly below that of last year. I have made 145 visits of inspection to scaffolding of which notice had been sent in, and in most cases the provisions of the Act were fairly well observed. I also made 143 visits to 64 buildings in the suburbs where scaffolding was being used.

Great improvement has been shown in construction of cottage scaffolding. Most of the builders have now disposed of the old makeshift ladders, and provided themselves with good and sound scaffold-planks. One scaffold in Gore was condemned and reconstructed, while two ladders in the same town were condemned and destroyed. During the year several large build-