

I invariably impress upon builders when engaged on the larger jobs the necessity of appointing a foreman to be in charge of the scaffolding, and that no alteration or interference with the construction of any portion of it should be made except with his authority. On smaller jobs this difficulty is not so great, as the general foreman can have a better supervision.

Most of the complaints received, I find, come from such places where the scaffolding has not been erected under the direct employer of the men using it, or where its management has not been under his personal or deputed control; and I therefore make it a rule to keep these jobs under especially strict observation.

The clause in the Act making it compulsory that all accidents occurring on buildings in course of erection shall be reported has had a very beneficial effect, even to preventing many accidents, as the employer, knowing that any accident, however slight, must be reported, and that inquiries will be made respecting it, is more careful to see that every precaution is taken.

I think it must be considered very gratifying that in proportion to the large number of workmen employed in all branches of a hazardous trade such as building, so few accidents occur. The number of accidents in connection with scaffolding during the year is 39, one of which was serious.

A fault that may be found with some builders is that they very seldom overhaul their scaffolding plant and gear before sending it up to the jobs, with the result that good, bad, and indifferent plant and gear are sent mixed up for the man erecting the scaffolding to sort out, and, of course, an Inspector has no legal power to condemn anything unsuitable until it is actually in use as scaffolding. However, very few builders make any objection to the destruction of any of their plant found defective when pointed out to them.

The regulation as to guard-rails to working-platforms, I think, would be improved by the disallowing of rope for this purpose. Guard-rails should be rigid, and not movable; workmen are used to rigidity in their surroundings, and their sense of safety is increased by the use of rigid rails. It is also very difficult to keep ropes at the required height, as they lengthen in dry weather.

I have to report that since early last year there has been a gradual falling-off of activity in the building trade, especially in residential and cottage building; but now there is every indication of things brightening up, although there are a great number of tradesmen unemployed. These are mostly carpenters, owing to the work being slack in the suburbs.

During the period under review 479 notices of intention to erect scaffolding were received; the increase from last year is accounted for by the fact that inspection has been extended further into the country districts.

Although warnings are as a rule given for a first offence, it was necessary during the year for 8 persons to be prosecuted for failing to give notice of intention to erect scaffolding; a conviction was obtained in each case. A number of others were warned for this offence.

Over 900 different structures and appliances were inspected, and alterations or additions were ordered in 240. In 35 cases the scaffolding was condemned, and workmen warned from working on it.

Thirty-nine accidents were reported under the Act during the year, but a very small number of these were in connection with scaffolding, as under the Act all accidents occurring in connection with buildings in course of erection, repair, &c., must be reported. The most serious accident was the collapse of a roof in course of construction, by which one man was killed and three injured. Most of the other accidents were slight, a good number arising from the carelessness of the workman.

There were 6 prosecutions for failing to report accidents, and a fine was imposed in each case. There are no doubt other accidents that are not reported, but none of these can be regarded as serious.

In concluding, I desire to thank all those with whom my duties have brought me in contact for their courtesy and attention to any suggestion which it has been my duty to make.

I have, &c.,

R. A. BOLLAND,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Nelson, 5th April, 1909.

I have the honour to submit, for your information, my annual report on the work of the Department in connection with the Scaffolding Inspection Act for the year ending 31st March.

As Inspector of Scaffolding for the Nelson, Westland, and Marlborough districts (as well as of Factories, Awards, &c., for the Nelson district), I have made a general inspection of buildings in course of erection.

The building trade in the districts has been fairly busy during the year. Visits of inspection have been made to all the principal towns, and scaffolding carefully inspected.

During the year 25 ladders were condemned as unsafe for use, chiefly on account of sprung sides. In 2 cases scaffold-cords were condemned as unfit for use, being perished from continual use amongst lime. Ten scaffolds were condemned as unfit for use; I gave directions for them to be taken down, and re-erected in accordance with the provisions of the Scaffolding Inspection Act and regulations. A better class of scaffolding material is now being used by builders, and more care is being taken in the erection of scaffolds.

The inspection of scaffolding has given satisfaction to the men employed on buildings, and it is with some satisfaction and pleasure that I have no accidents to report for the year.

I may also state, that with few exceptions, contractors and builders have readily carried out any alteration to scaffolding required. There have been no prosecutions under the Act during the year.

I have, &c.,

S. TYSON,

Inspector of Scaffolding.

The Secretary for Labour, Wellington.