

1909.
NEW ZEALAND.

FIRE BRIGADES OF THE DOMINION

(REPORT ON, BY INSPECTOR OF FIRE BRIGADES) FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1909.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

SIR,—

Office of the Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 1st July, 1909.

Herewith I have the honour to lay before you a general report relating to the working of the Fire Brigades Act, also including various matters in connection therewith.

“The Fire Brigades Act, 1906,” was passed on the 8th October, 1906, and this Act was repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, by “The Fire Brigades Act, 1907,” passed on the 25th November, 1907. I was appointed Inspector of Fire Brigades under the latter Act as from the 15th June, 1908, and this report covers the period from the passing of “The Fire Brigades Act, 1906” (8th October, 1906), until the 30th June, 1909, being the first general report made by me.

Following the coming into force of the Act of 1907, twenty-one Fire Boards were established as in the following districts—viz.: Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Whangarei, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Hawera, Feilding, Dannevirke, Palmerston North, Masterton, Petone, Waimate, Alexandra, Oamaru, Maori Hill, Lawrence, Milton, Greymouth, and Hokitika.

In terms of a resolution, as provided for by clause 7, section 1 (this clause has been amended in the Act for 1908, and now requires a vote of the ratepayers to be taken on the question), passed at a meeting of the Wellington City Council held on the 13th February, 1908, application was made to the Governor to declare that the City of Wellington should cease to be a fire district, and the Order in Council was issued accordingly. Similarly, on the 29th February, on the application of the Alexandra Borough Council, an Order in Council was issued declaring Alexandra no longer a fire district. The same course was taken by the Waimate Borough Council, and that borough also ceased to be a fire district. At present neither of these two last-mentioned boroughs are eligible as a fire district, Alexandra having a population of one thousand and Waimate eighteen hundred, in place of the minimum of two thousand required by the Act of 1908.

On the 11th August, 1908, a poll of the ratepayers of Hastings was taken, and by a vote of the majority polled it was decided to apply to the Governor in Council to declare the Borough of Hastings a fire district. The declaration was issued accordingly. Thus there are at present nineteen districts working under the Fire Brigades Act of 1908.

In both Wellington and Napier efforts have been made to have a poll of the ratepayers taken on this question, but in both cases by a majority vote of the local councillors they refused to allow the matter to be submitted to the ratepayers for their decision.

During the past year I have officially inspected each brigade twice, as follows:—

Auckland: July, 1908, and May, 1909. Reports attached, dated 7th August, 1908, and 9th June, 1909.

Christchurch: September, 1908, and June, 1909. Reports attached, dated 19th November, 1908, and 30th June, 1909.

Dunedin: September, 1908, and March, 1909. Report attached, dated 30th June, 1909.