

DUNEDIN FIRE BRIGADE.

Personnel of the Brigade.

The members of the brigade appear to be a smart body of men, of good physique, well drilled and disciplined; but more permanent men are required, this section of the brigade being decidedly weak in number.

Station.

The present Central Station is quite unsuitable for the smart work required, and for other purposes, such as living accommodation, &c., of a modern fire brigade. The "get away" is risky, and causes loss of time in responding to an alarm of fire. (The Fire Board have since decided to build a new station, and a good site has been secured in Cumberland Street for this purpose.)

Plant and Appliances.

With the late additions—motor, hose, &c.—the equipment is fairly satisfactory, with the exception that a second motor is required for use in the suburbs; this should be of a smaller and very much less expensive type than the one now in use. Also, the present fire-escape is unwieldy, and very slow in its working; alterations should be made in it, or a lighter and more suitable appliance purchased.

Water Pressure and Reticulation.

The provisions for water-storage and the static pressure available for fire purposes are excellent; but the reticulation is faulty, and leaves very much to be desired, due in the first place to the small diameter of the pipes laid down, and in the second place to the great amount of corrosion apparently taking place. Whilst in Dunedin I was shown a piece of a 3 in. pipe that had just been taken up in which not more than 1 in. of clear waterway remained. Under no circumstances should pipes as small as 3 in. in diameter be employed—that is, if it is to be used for fire-extinction purposes. This from an economic point of view as well as from that of utility.

SOUTH DUNEDIN AND CAVERSHAM BRIGADES.

These two brigades should be amalgamated, and made an integral part of the city brigade. In any case, if the best results are to be obtained, they should and must be under the absolute control of the Superintendent; otherwise, divided or partially recognised authority must produce poor results. The second motor should be stationed in this district; also a fire-alarm system, and I would suggest one of a more modern type than that at present in use in the city should be installed, with direct communication between the sub-station and the Central Station.

DANNEVIRKE.

SIR,— Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 31st December, 1908.

In reply to your request of the 11th instant, addressed to the Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, asking for a copy of Inspector Hugo's report on the Dannevirke Fire Brigade, herewith I have the honour to forward you a report dealing with matters in that connection.

My first inspection was made on the 26th June last, and during its course it was apparent that the members of the brigade were in considerable need of more drill, and instruction in the various matters connected with fire-brigade work. I inspected your brigade again on Friday, the 15th instant. At 9.22 p.m., by my instructions, a false alarm was given by ringing the fire-bell. The first fireman put in an appearance 23 seconds after he was told that there was a supposed fire on a vacant section at a spot about 180 yards distant from the station, and was instructed to get a delivery to work there. Water-pressure, as shown on the station gauge, 84 lb. The first water was shown at 9.27.30 p.m., or 5½ minutes from the first toll of the bell. This was not a good result; but that was mostly due to the first man, without fully understanding the exact locality of the supposed fire, running off with the reel, and only reaching the place after going in a roundabout direction. At 9.33 p.m., or 11 minutes after the alarm was given, the brigade was mustered. The Superintendent and fourteen men were in attendance, or fifteen out of a full complement of twenty-three. Considering that the bell was not rung as well as it might have been, and the rain and bad weather at the time, this muster was good. A mistake was made in getting to work, in that the first delivery was not taken from the nearest hydrant, and again a second delivery to work from the first standpipe, instead of sinking a second standpipe at the hydrant nearest to the scene of the supposed fire.

Personnel of the Brigade.

The members of the brigade appear to be a smart active body of men, but they require more instruction and drill. In particular, it should be impressed upon them to take the work in a more deliberate manner, the before-mentioned mistakes being apparently due as much to overanxiety to get to work smartly as to any other cause.