

LAWRENCE.

SIR,—

Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 21st December, 1908.

In reply to your letter dated the 14th instant, addressed to the Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs, and asking for a copy of Inspector Hugo's report on the Lawrence Fire Brigade, I have the honour to inform you that, owing to certain circumstances, and of which members of your Board are aware, I was unable to make a proper inspection of your brigade, and therefore can furnish no report as to its efficiency. However, I hope in the near future to be able to make such an inspection as will enable me to send you the desired report.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

J. Rattray, Esq., Secretary, Lawrence Fire Board, Lawrence.

I have made two visits to Lawrence for the purpose of inspecting their brigade—10th September, 1908, and 25th March.

At my first visit, upon my arrival at the fire-station, at 8 p.m. on the 10th September, the Superintendent and eight men were in attendance, but objections were made to getting the plant to work on the score that they were wearing private clothes, and did not have their uniforms with them; therefore I could form no opinion as to their knowledge of practical work. I might state that I had wired the Secretary of the Fire Board the previous day informing him of my proposed visit and its purpose. I gave some instruction on various matters, and subsequently inspected the town, its water-supply, and fire-equipment.

Upon the occasion of my second visit, in March, it was the regular practice night of the brigade, and ordinary routine wet drill was carried out under the direction of the Superintendent.

Lawrence is a town covering an area of 640 acres, but has only eleven hundred inhabitants. The buildings are mostly wood, with the exception of those in the main street, on a lower level. It is a hilly residential district, with the dwellings mostly detached or scattered. The full strength of the brigade consists of a Superintendent, a Deputy, and ten men. There is a high-pressure water system, with a head of 180 ft., but the reticulation is old, and only a partial one, with practically no pressure available on such of the higher levels as the mains are laid. There is one fire-station within a few yards of the main street, but there is little or no protection against fire on the higher levels, or beyond where the water-reticulation is laid.

MAORI HILL.

Maori Hill is a residential hilly district covering an area of 3,700 acres. The houses are mostly confined to the south and east wards, but the greater part of the district is yet unbuilt upon. The inhabited area is well reticulated with water mains, and an excellent pressure is available for fire-extinction.

Two inspections of the brigade have been made—viz., on the 15th September, 1908, and on the 31st March, 1909. At the time of my first inspection, in September, the brigade had only been formed a short time. Their equipment was very insufficient, and their knowledge of fire-brigade work very meagre; but improvements in both respects have since been made.

At my second inspection, on the 31st March last, I gave a false alarm of fire by ringing the bell at the Borough Council Chambers at 7.21 p.m., and the Superintendent and nine men responded to the call in smart time. There was some little delay in getting to work, but there was a decided improvement in comparison with my previous visit.

The brigade has a full strength of twenty-one members, divided into two sections—the Superintendent and twelve men stationed in the south ward, and the Deputy Superintendent, with seven men, at Woodhaugh.

There are two stations—one that has been just lately built, in the south ward, and a hose-reel shed at Woodhaugh. The equipment consists of a hand-reel, with hose standpipes and branches at each station.

Coupling-ladders and hand-pumps are required; also a fire-alarm system, connected up to the large fire-bell, should be installed.

MASTERTON.

SIR,—

Office of the Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 15th July, 1908.

In reply to your letter dated the 7th instant, addressed to the Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs, in which you ask, on behalf of your Board, for a report from the Inspector of Fire Brigades dealing with certain fire-prevention matters affecting your district, I have the honour to reply to your questions as follows:—