

### *Personnel of the Brigade.*

The members of the brigade are a smart, robust body of men, who seem to take great interest in their brigade, both officers and men appearing anxious to improve their knowledge of fire-brigade work, and to profit by any instruction given to them.

### *Stations.*

The Central Station occupies a good position in relation to the risks of the town, but more accommodation should be provided. The sub-stations are well placed in their respective districts.

### *Plant.*

The plant and appliances generally are in good order, and, with some minor exceptions, are sufficient for present requirements. The amount of hose in good working-order at present in stock—3,000 ft.—is ample for the time being. A couple of C pattern "London Fire Brigade" hand-pumps, fitted with stirrups, should be obtained; also, say, two pick-back fire-axes. Nozzles of a larger bore than those at present in use are required.

### *Water-pressure and Reticulation.*

The average water-pressure—120 lb. to the square inch, rising to 140 lb.—is an excellent one for fire-extinction purposes, but, owing to the small-bore nozzles hitherto in use, the best results have not been obtained from it. I believe this fault has already been attended to and rectified. The reticulation is fairly good, and I understand the few 3 in. mains at present laid are being, or are to be, replaced by 4 in. or larger. The hydrants are spaced quite far enough apart, and some more of them should certainly be laid down in the more congested parts of the town, particularly in the neighbourhood of the larger fire risks.

Seeing that both officers and men appear anxious to make themselves more efficient in their work, I would suggest that regular drill and instruction classes should be held embracing the various appropriate subjects, as explained by me during the course of my address to the brigade at the time of my visit to your town. In following out this suggestion, care is required not to fall into a monotonous routine of one set line of drill, thereby causing the men to lose interest. This is a very common fault in fire brigades, but if carried out in the manner indicated above, the subjects upon which firemen ought to be instructed are so various that it is a comparatively easy matter to maintain their interest in the work.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

C. Howard, Esq., Secretary, New Plymouth Fire Board, New Plymouth.

SIR,—

Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 19th February, 1909.

I have the honour to forward, for the information of your Board, a report in connection with my recent visit of inspection, and dealing with the general efficiency of your brigade.

At 9.27 p.m. on Tuesday, the 5th January, I caused the fire-bell at the Central Station to be rung, and directed the brigade to get to work with two deliveries at a certain position in Vivian Street, about 300 yards distant from the station. The first water was shown full on at 9.30.32 p.m. At 9.37 p.m. the brigade was mustered, and it was found that the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and nineteen men were in attendance. The brigade was again mustered upon their return to the station at 9.45 p.m., when twenty-seven members, including officers, answered the roll-call.

At the inspection muster on the following night at 8 p.m. thirty-one members, including officers, were in attendance.

The time from the first toll of the bell, at 9.27 p.m., until the water was shown—3 minutes 22 seconds—was very creditable. The muster of the brigade—two officers and nineteen men—at 9.37 p.m., or 10 minutes from the time of the first call, was very satisfactory.

The number of members who attended the two following musters was also very satisfactory.

The plant concentrated was ample for the supposed purpose.

Upon inspecting the plant and appliances I find they are maintained in good order and condition.

The required work was carried out in a smart and workmanlike manner.

The brigade were totally unaware of my presence in your town, and the prompt response to the false alarm, combined with the good musters, prove that the members of the brigade take an active interest in the work.

Referring to my previous recommendations, I find that the use of larger-bore nozzles has been adopted, and hand-pumps have been ordered; but there should be a more systematic course of drills established in connection with rescue work, resuscitation of unconscious persons, &c.

A plan of the reticulation of the town, with diameters of the mains and the static pressure at various points shown thereon, should be provided for the information of the officers and men of the brigade. This knowledge is very necessary, enabling fire-brigade officers to decide correctly how many deliveries may be safely or efficiently taken from the mains in the vicinity of the fire.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

C. Howard, Esq., Secretary, New Plymouth Fire Board, New Plymouth.