

at the place indicated. It was 8.11.57 p.m., or nearly 7 minutes after, before the first water was shown. I understand that in the first place there was some delay in harnessing the horse; secondly, there was difficulty in making connection between the hose and the standpipe; again, in throwing the ladders the work was done in very slipshod manner, far removed from the smart decisive style of work expected from a well-drilled brigade. Altogether, the "inspection drill" of your brigade was far from satisfactory.

#### Personnel.

The members of the brigade appear to be an active, robust body of men, who seemed to take an intelligent interest in the address that I delivered to them, and who only require proper instruction and systematic drill to make of them a very efficient brigade; but this efficiency cannot be attained and maintained in any brigade unless the chief officer himself takes an active interest in the work, setting the example to his officers and men. Any laxity on the part of a Superintendent in this respect quickly produces a similar result in the work and discipline of his brigade.

The size of Palmerston North, with its population of over ten thousand persons, and its large and increasing fire risks, necessitates the appointment of a permanent Superintendent to take charge of its brigade, and the man to be appointed to this position should be one fully qualified to instruct the members of the brigade in all branches of modern fire-extinction methods, with a general knowledge of up-to-date fire-prevention; be competent to keep in order and in some degree repair plant and hose; and be able to drive a motor, &c.: such a man can be procured without incurring any increase on the present estimate of annual maintenance, if carried out on the lines I suggested to your Chairman at the time of my visit to your town.

#### Site for New Station.

The site which has been purchased with the object of erecting a new central station thereon is a very suitable one for the purpose.

#### Plant.

The stock of hose in good working-order—2,000 ft.—is not enough, and more should be obtained.

A couple of C pattern "London Fire Brigade" hand-pumps, with stirrup attachment, should be purchased.

I would recommend that the horse hose-reel should be replaced by a hose-and-ladder motor-car. A suitable appliance can be obtained at a very reasonable cost by purchasing a chassis of some reliable make, and having the body built in New Zealand to suit local requirements. Should this recommendation be adopted, it must be clearly understood it is imperative that arrangements would have to be made for competent supervision and care, in addition to the driving. Under such conditions only is it possible to obtain successful results; but given these conditions motor fire-cars have proved one of the very best appliances that have been adopted for fire-brigade work of late years. I make this suggestion subject to your Board being able to borrow the amount necessary for the purchase of the motor, so that the capital cost may be spread over a period of some years, and not unduly increase the estimate for any one year.

#### Water Pressure and Reticulation.

Your average water-pressure is not a good working-pressure, and arrangements should be perfected for concentrating the water as quickly as possible in case of need. The reticulation has been well designed, and the extensions to the system are being carried out in accordance therewith. The hydrants as laid down are well spaced, and ample in number.

I shall be pleased, at any time you may desire it, to give you all information as to cost of plant or appliances, or advice as to the design and erection of stations, &c.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

William Hunter, Esq., Secretary, Palmerston North Fire Board.

#### REPORT No. 2. (30th June, 1909.)

I made a second inspection of this brigade on the 2nd and 3rd February last.

A surprise false alarm of fire was given by ringing the fire-bell at the Central Fire-station at 9.24 p.m. on the evening of the 2nd February. The brigade was instructed to get to work at a point in Rangitikei Street about 380 yards distant. Water was shown at 9.28.37 p.m., or 4 minutes 37 seconds from time of first call. The appliances were turned out smartly, but there was some little delay in turning on the water, and, although done much quicker than upon the occasion of my first inspection, this time can still be improved upon. The plant turned out was sufficient for that particular call, with the exception that it would be advisable to carry more hose.

The attendance of the brigade at the subsequent muster, held 10 minutes from the time of first call, was satisfactory. There was reported present—Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, sixteen men, and two on duty, or twenty accounted for out of a total strength of twenty-five. The attendance of the Fire Police—one officer and five men out of a total of fifteen—was a very poor result.

At the inspection muster at 8 p.m. on the following evening there was reported present: Fire Brigade—Superintendent, Deputy, twelve men, and two on duty. Fire Police—Captain and twelve men.