

The plant and appliances are maintained in good order and condition.

At the time of my visit there was considerable danger of the horse, through excitement, slipping on the concrete floor when starting out of the station, but since then large coir mats have been obtained and laid on the floor of the engine-house, and this now gives a secure foothold.

In connection with my last visit the following letter was sent to the secretary of the Board :—

“ SIR,— “ Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 22nd February, 1911.
“ With reference to my visit of inspection to Oamaru on the 7th and 8th instant, I have again to recommend (see report dated 3rd March, 1909, also Annual Report, 1910) the placing of a small reel-shed and bell towards the north end of Thames Street, shed to be equipped with hand-reel, hose, stand-pipe, and ladders; also, I have to call your attention to the fact that several of the hydrant-caps are still bolted down in a manner that would cause serious delay to the brigade in getting to work should a fire take place in the immediate vicinity of such hydrants. I would also recommend that your Board should urge upon the Borough Council the necessity of laying down water-mains and hydrants in Usk and Exe Streets with as little delay as possible. Both these streets are well built on, and it is a long stretch between Thames and Humber Streets with no plugs intervening. In reference to the proposed fire-alarm installation, I would suggest that this matter should be held over for a short time pending further information.
“ I have, &c.,
“ THOS. T. HUGO,
“ Inspector of Fire Brigades.”

A feature of the fires that have taken place in the Oamaru Fire District during the past year is that out of a total of 9 no less than 4 fires have occurred in unoccupied houses within the last six months; 9 fires have taken place as against 5 during the previous year, an increase of 4.

The fire loss amounted to £799, compared with £523, an increase of £276.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1911–12 is £500, the same amount as for the year 1910–11.

PALMERSTON NORTH.

Two inspections of the Palmerston North Fire Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., 31st August, 1910, and 23rd February, 1911, respectively.

At the request of the Fire Board a special visit to Palmerston North was made on the 26th May, 1911, in connection with Board matters. The new Central Fire-station, situated in Cuba Street, was officially opened by the Hon. Minister of Internal Affairs on Wednesday, 31st August, 1910. The building is a brick structure of two stories, containing a commodious engine-house, two loose-boxes, all necessary offices, workshops, store-room, &c., and provides accommodation for five single men in addition to two sets of married quarters.

At the inspection drill on the 23rd February, 1911, there were present the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and 18 firemen; these with 4 on duty accounted for 24 out of a then total strength of 26. This attendance was satisfactory. The various drills were carried out smartly and in a very efficient manner.

The present strength of the brigade is, Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and 25 firemen, or 27 all told. This number includes 2 permanent officers and 1 permanent fireman.

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The following interim report was forwarded to the secretary of the Board :—

SIR,— “ Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 16th March, 1911.
“ In my first report to your Board, dated 20th August, 1908, I made the recommendation that the horse hose-reel cart should be replaced by a hose-and-ladder motor-car. I understood some eighteen months ago that it was the intention, very shortly from that time, to increase the gravitation pressure to something like 130 lb. This has not been done, and, whatever the reason, the present available pressure, an average of 70 lb., is not sufficient for fire-extinction purposes, and I have now to repeat the recommendation stated above, with the addition that the car should be fitted with a fire-pump so that with fires of any magnitude the brigade may be expected to deal with them with some measure of success.
“ I have, &c.,
“ THOS. T. HUGO,
“ Inspector of Fire Brigades.”

In addition to the foregoing recommendation I have to call the attention of the Board to the necessity of installing a street fire-alarm system throughout the town.

During the year ending 30th June, 1911, 33 fires have occurred in the Palmerston North Fire District, as against 36 for the previous year, a decrease of 3.

The loss by fire amounted to £9,765, compared with £21,535, a decrease of £11,770.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1911–12 is £1,699 14s., as against £1,504 for the year 1910–11, an increase of £195 14s., of which increase £90 is on account of overdraft from previous year.

PETONE.

Two official inspections of the Petone Fire Brigade and its equipment have been held—viz., 18th November, 1910, and 25th April, 1911.

At the first inspection, 18th November, 1910, there were present the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, 14 firemen, and 2 messengers, with 1 on leave, or 19 accounted for out of a then strength of 21 all told. This attendance was fairly satisfactory.