

"St. Aubyns: When the water system is extended throughout the district a shed should be built and equipped with the hose-cart from Fitzroy, and a bell supplied.

"In the case of each of the suburban districts it will be necessary to enrol men, residents of the respective districts, as auxiliaries to the brigade, otherwise any efficient protection is impossible.

"In the matter of purchasing a motor fire-appliance, as explained fully to your Board, there are three alternatives as to the equipment of the car:—

"(1.) The car to be provided with a telescopic trussed ladder to reach 35 ft. in height when extended, one 10 ft. pole ladder, one 3-gallons hand CO₂ chemical extingisher, accommodation for carrying 1,400 ft. unlined hose, stand-pipes, and all necessary gear; also to be fitted with a CO₂ chemical cylinder having a capacity of 40 gallons and 200 ft. of special hose: approximate cost, £800.

"(2.) Instead of the 40-gallons chemical cylinder, the car to be fitted with a fire-pump having a pumping-capacity of 300 to 400 gallons per minute; approximate cost, £1,050.

"Either of the two foregoing machines would require not less than a 60 B.h.p. engine.

"(3.) Car to be fitted with both chemical cylinder and pump; approximate cost, £1,200. This last machine would require an engine of 75 B.h.p.

"Should your Board decide to carry out the above recommendations it will be necessary to appoint a permanent caretaker to reside in the cottage adjoining the proposed new Central Fire Station, and the man appointed to the position should be one well capable, after instruction, of driving and looking after the motor. Of course, any repairs would have to be done by an experienced motor engineer.

"The question of installing an electric street fire-alarm system could be deferred to some later period

"I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

"Inspector of Fire Brigades."

On the occasion of my last visit it was found that some of the street hydrants recently put down were defective in construction: the lower waterway, instead of being 3 in. in diameter, only measuring 2½ in., and the orifice was not cylindrical; also, the washers were not being properly fitted, leaving in fact a waterway only some 2 in. in diameter.

The number of fires that occurred in the district was six, or four less than during the previous year.

The fire loss amounted to £760, as compared with £715, an increase of £45.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1912-13 is £1,058 0s. 3d., as against £559 2s. for 1911-12, an increase of £498 18s. 3d. The increase in the amount of the estimates is largely due to the necessity of providing for the protection of the districts lately included in the borough boundaries.

OAMARU.

Two inspections of the Oamaru Fire Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., 20th September, 1911, and 20th January, 1912.

At the first inspection there were present the Superintendent and ten firemen; these, with five on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade—sixteen all told. This inspection had been called for the 19th, but the same afternoon I found it impossible to reach Oamaru that night, and telegraphed postponing inspection until the next evening. Under those circumstances the attendance must be regarded as satisfactory.

Various test drills, wet and dry, were carried out in an efficient manner.

The following report, forwarded to the secretary of the Board, covers the second inspection:—

"SIR,—

"February, 1912.

"Following upon my inspection of the Oamaru Fire Brigade and its equipment held on the 30th January last, I beg to submit the following report for the consideration of your Board.

"At the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and twelve firemen; these, with two absent on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade—viz., sixteen all told—a satisfactory attendance.

"The turnout of the hose-reel was effected in twenty-two seconds; and the subsequent work required was carried out smartly and efficiently. The station and appliances are maintained in good order and condition.

"A test was made of the pressure in the water-mains, the gauge registering 111 lb. in Tyne Street, and 101 lb. at the hydrant in Itchens Street a little above the fire-station. The experiments carried out proved that in those mains tested the flow of water was normal—that is, there is no undue corrosion in the pipes. During the course of the experiments it was apparent that some of the nozzles in use were very defective, the jets spreading badly a few feet from the branch, and the brigade should be provided with new nozzles—say, one 1½ in., three 1 in., and one ¾ in., or five in all; also, the branches want straightening and the dents taking out. A water-pressure gauge should be provided, and fixed in a prominent place in the watch-room.

"The authorized strength of the brigade—viz., sixteen all told—is on the weak side, and the number at all times available to work at fires should not be allowed to fall below that strength, and provision should be made, say, by enrolling two or three probationers, who could take the place of any of the regular firemen absent from the town, sick or on leave.

"I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

"Inspector of Fire Brigades."