

In addition to the statutory inspections, visits were paid for special purposes, as also were a number of visits sanctioned by the Minister of Internal Affairs in accordance with requests received from various local and other bodies, as follows :—

Rotorua—5th August, 1914 : Consideration of tenders for the supply of a motor fire-appliance.

Taihape—6th August : Inspection of a locally invented street fire-alarm system.

Palmerston North—6th August, 1914 : Inspection and report upon the safety of exits from Municipal Opera House.

Petone—4th September, 1914 : Testing of flow-gauges.

Hamilton—21st January, 1915 : Special Board meeting for consideration of motor tenders.

Timaru—21st to 27th February, 1915 : Annual Conference and demonstration of the United Fire Brigades Association.

Dannevirke—16th March, 1915 : Consultation with Fire Board.

Ruakura—11th May, 1915 : Inspection of the fire-prevention equipment at the Government Farm of Instruction.

In all, fifty-eight personal visits were made, and, as usual, instructional addresses were given at the conclusion of the inspection drills, with special attention to the prevention of fires. Advice has been given to local bodies and others in relation to fire risks and protection and purchase of fire appliances. Imported machinery has been tested, specifications drawn up, and supervision exercised over the manufacture of plant and appliances made in the Dominion.

Following upon the invitation received from the executive officers of the United Fire Brigades Association, I attended their annual conference, as also the biennial demonstration held at Timaru in February last. An address on various fire matters, more particularly on the subject of modern motor appliances, was delivered to the delegates attending the Conference. The results of the competitions were a very decided improvement on those of preceding years, mainly brought about by the association adopting as the standard for the competitions plant made in accordance with the Government patterns, and that ultimately met with almost unanimous commendation from both officials and competitors. I hope to see at the next Conference a number of improvements made in the conditions governing the competitions, particularly in the coiled hose and the baby-rescue event; the last mentioned, for instance, is at present carried out in a manner never seen, in fact would be impossible in actual fire work.

About the usual number of accidents have occurred to firemen in the execution of their duty, of which the following were the most serious : Hamilton, 18th August, 1914 : A fireman severely burned on hands and arms; at the same time another fireman sustained burns about the neck and chest. Masterton, 10th January, 1915 : Through the fire-engine skidding and striking the kerb whilst proceeding to a fire, one of the firemen was thrown off and broke a small bone in his foot. Greymouth, 5th March, 1915 : A fireman considerably hurt by a fall caused by the slipping of a ladder. Hawera, 14th May, 1915 : A fireman sustained a severe cut just below the knee-cap, caused by the slipping of his axe when using it.

No fatalities to citizens has been reported from any of the fire districts, and only one casualty : Dunedin, 5th March, 1915 : A married woman severely burned about the face.

The principal improvements in equipment, effected or in course of being carried out, are as follows :—

*Stations.*—Timaru : A new central station built, and now in occupation. The building is of two stories, in brick, and in addition to two sets of married quarters, provides accommodation for eight single men; an engine-house (50 ft. by 32 ft.), watch-room, large social hall, and all other necessary accommodation and conveniences.

New Plymouth : A new central station erected, and now in occupation. The building, of two stories in reinforced concrete, and which is practically a first section, provides accommodation for eight single men, engine-house (48 ft. by 31 ft.), social hall (49 ft. by 31 ft.), watch, board, and store rooms, kitchen, and all necessary conveniences. A cottage, originally on the section of land when purchased, has been renovated, and is being utilized as married quarters for a permanent caretaker.

Gisborne : A new central station is now in course of erection, and should be ready for occupation in about six months' time.

*Motor Appliances.*—Timaru : A new 65 h.p. motor was received in Timaru last March. The machine is fitted with hose-box, turbine pump having a pumping capacity of 400–500 gallons per minute, and a 60 ft. detachable extension ladder.

Dunedin : An electric traction turn-table ladder was received last month. The ladder, also manipulated by electricity, has an extended height of 83 ft.

Hastings : A 25 h.p. ordinary commercial chassis was purchased, and a body built thereon locally to suit requirements; also the 40-gallon chemical cylinder was taken off its own carriage and mounted on the chassis.

Rotorua : A 45 h.p. second-hand motor was purchased, the old body taken off and a new one built locally to carry men, hose, and ladders.

New motor appliances are on order as follows :—

Masterton : A 60 h.p. hose, ladder, and reciprocating-pump machine.

Whangarei : A 50 h.p. machine, fitted with extension ladder and first-aid pumping outfit.

Christchurch : A 40 h.p. hose and turbine-pump machine.

Hamilton : A 65 h.p. hose, ladder, and turbine-pump machine.

New Plymouth : A 65 h.p. hose, ladder, turbine-pump, and first-aid pumping outfit machine.

The first three mentioned have now been on order for over twelve months, but war exigencies have delayed delivery, and, according to information received from the manufacturers, it will probably be some considerable time yet before any deliveries are made.