

CHRISTCHURCH.

Two inspections of the Christchurch Fire Brigade and its stations and equipment have been made—viz., 3rd December, 1914, and the 16th and 17th April, 1915.

At both inspections the Central and the substations at Sydenham and St. Albans, with their respective equipments, were found in good order, the “turn outs” were performed smartly, and the various drills carried out in a satisfactory manner.

In view of the circumstances I considered it necessary to forward the following letter to the Secretary of the Board:—

SIR,—

19th March, 1915.

I would respectfully call the attention of your Board to the dangerous fire conditions existing in your city at any time the brigade is away attending fires at what is locally known as the “guaranteed risks” situated outside the city boundaries, these risks mostly consisting of large stores, factories, mills, &c. Upon receipt of an alarm of fire from any one of them, the Superintendent considers it necessary to despatch the large motor pump machine with a squad of seven men, a quite small enough contingent to hope to deal successfully with a fire occurring in buildings of the class in question.

During the daytime the number of men available at the Central Station for actual fire-work is fourteen all told, so that with seven men away outside the city it leaves only seven men available at the Central Station. Upon receiving an alarm of fire from within a certain area of the more risky portion of the city, it is customary to turn out practically the full city strength of men and appliances, and the only hope of checking an outbreak in buildings such as Strange’s or Ballantyne’s, with their enormous and most inflammable stocks, wherein the fire spreads with almost incredible rapidity, and when every second counts, is the prompt arrival of the brigade with a sufficiency of men and appliances; and for a brigade in any city under similar circumstances to those prevailing in Christchurch—that is, as to organization and cost of its fire service—to be able to respond to such a call with only one appliance and seven men is, in my opinion, a most inefficient system of working, this always excepting what is practically unavoidable, such as a simultaneous or second call occurring from within the city boundaries. Therefore I would strongly recommend that your Board should not allow their Brigade to attend fires outside the city boundaries, or if it is decided to continue the present system, then the strength of the brigade should be increased by the addition of certainly not less than three more men.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO.

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

Thirteen more street call-boxes have been installed, and the street fire-alarm system now comprises sixteen circuits, having 103 call-points. One more private automatic fire-detector installation has been connected up with the Central Station, making twenty-two in all. The 40 h.p. motor hose-and-turbine-pump machine, ordered over twelve months ago, has not yet been received, the delay in delivery being due to the prevailing war conditions.

During the year 159 calls were received, out of which number seventy-five proved to be for actual fires within the district a decrease of twenty when compared with those of last year.

The fire loss for the year amounted to £11,674, as against £17,709 for 1913–14, a decrease of £6,035.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1915–16 is £7,210, as compared with £8,000 for 1914–15, a decrease of £790.

DANNEVIRKE.

Two inspections of the Dannevirke Brigade, its stations and equipment, have been made—viz., 23rd October, 1914, and 8th June, 1915. The following report, forwarded to the Secretary of the Board, covers the first inspection:—

SIR,—

30th October, 1914.

An inspection of the Dannevirke Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 23rd instant, when there was present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and fourteen firemen, these representing the full strength of the brigade then on the roll. Certain tests were made of the pressure and flow of water from the main in High Street, when directly off the 8 in. main with a standing pressure of 91 lb. through 2½ in. delivery-pipe the instruments registered a flow of 460 gallons per minute, and off the same main but through the 3 in. branch on to the footpath the flow registered was 430 gallons per minute.

Herewith I beg to confirm the verbal recommendations that were discussed in detail with the Chairman and members of your Board at the informal meeting at the fire-station the same evening, viz.: First, the necessity of providing motor transport for the men and appliances; second, utilizing of the existing telephone service as an auxiliary system of fire-alarms until such time that your Board can see the way clear to install a modern street fire-alarm system; third, the matter of the installation of automatic fire-alarms in the large stores and warehouses.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

At the second inspection muster in June there was present the Superintendent, Deputy, fifteen firemen, and two messengers. These accounted for nineteen out of a total strength of twenty then on the roll. During the carrying-out of the subsequent various drills it was evident that the men required