

The manual pump was taken out and got to work. It was found necessary to prime the pump before any suction was obtained, and it took 4 minutes 30 seconds hard pumping before water was shown.

The manufacturer's agent informs me that the information asked for in respect to petrol-driven pumps has not yet come to hand, and, in view of the very inadequate equipment, I have to again recommend that the brigade should, without further delay, be supplied with a couple of hand pumps, London Fire Brigade pattern, and fitted with stirrups, as also with twelve collapsible canvas buckets 9 in. diameter and 12 in. in depth.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

SIR,—

31st March, 1915.

An inspection of the Milton Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 9th instant, when there was present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, seven firemen, and one messenger, or ten out of the total strength of fifteen; the other five men were on leave. Several drills were carried out in a fairly satisfactory manner.

I note that no buckets for use with the hand pump have yet been provided, also that the new gear recently supplied to the brigade is not made in accordance with the Government patterns.

I would call the attention of your Board to the dangerous conditions existing at a certain hotel at the time of my visit to Milton, due to the escape of acetylene gas at various points throughout the building, and owing to the main cock being damaged there was a difficulty in shutting off the gas at the meter. Inquiry and examination made it apparent that there is considerable neglect in looking after the fittings, combined with the fact that the house in question is an old wooden building having narrow tortuous passage and practically entirely unprovided with any proper fire-escapes. There was altogether a most dangerous condition of things existing, to which I called the attention of the Superintendent of your brigade, and I would suggest that your Board should represent to the proper authorities the need for a competent supervision of the acetylene-gas installations, &c.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Boards.

No improvement has yet been made in the supply of water for fire-extinction purposes in the borough, but the Board has recently provided the brigade with a new pump, having a pumping capacity of 50 gallons per minute. It is mounted on a two-wheeled detachable carriage, from which it is dismounted when pumping operations are necessary.

During the year only one fire occurred in the district, two less than during the previous year.

The fire loss amounted to £250, as against £1,125 for 1913-14, a decrease of £875.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1915-16 is £110, as compared with £100 for 1914-15, an increase of £10.

NEW PLYMOUTH

Two inspections of the New Plymouth and one of the Fitzroy Brigades, with their respective equipment, have been made—viz., 15th and 16th September, 1914, and 2nd February, 1915.

The two following reports forwarded to the Secretary of the Board cover the three inspections :—

SIR,—

Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 25th September, 1914.

An inspection of the New Plymouth Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 15th instant, when there was present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and eighteen firemen; these, with one on duty and one on leave, accounted for the full strength of twenty-two then on the roll.

The first-aid motor tender was turned out, and got to work smartly, and a test run up some of the steeper gradients proves that the motor is equal to perform the work required under the restricted conditions as laid down by your Board; also a heavier load was placed on this machine, and a further run made for experimental purposes. Certain experiments were made with the recently purchased 30 ft. extension ladder, which proved that the ladder in question is not sufficiently stable for the work of your brigade.

An inspection of the Fitzroy section of the brigade was made on the 16th instant, when there was present the Captain, Lieutenant, and twelve firemen; these, with one on leave, representing the full strength of the brigade. When getting to work in Darnell Street I found the standpipe could not be properly shipped on the hydrant; that was, when screwed down as tightly as possible the head of the standpipe rocked some 6 in., and the same fault was found in a second out of the three hydrants laid down in that street, also out of the four hydrants laid down in Sackville Street; the standpipe could not be shipped at all on one hydrant, and not properly on another. Further, I would point out that when laying down street hydrants it is customary, with the object of facilitating the work of the brigade, so to place the hydrants that the entrance-way for the foot of the standpipe all point in the same direction. Contrary to this custom, I found that of the four hydrants in Sackville Street the entrance-way of two lie parallel with the street, one is at right angles, and the fourth in a diagonal direction. In Darnell Street two are parallel and one at a right angle with the street. Time did not permit of me making further investigations, but, as the whole matter seriously affects the efficient work of the brigade, an immediate inspection of all the street-hydrants should be made, and the Borough Council requested to at once remedy the defect, and in future to observe uniformity in the patterns and method of laying down the street hydrants.