

I would again (see report dated the 24th February) direct the attention of your Board to the advisability of utilizing the town telephone system as an auxiliary fire-alarm service on the lines as already fully explained.

In the matter of the new Central Fire Station, for the reasons given at the time of my visit to New Plymouth, I would recommend your Board to cut out the tower as showing in the plan at present, and substitute therefore an iron-framed skeleton tower, or, should it be more convenient at the present stage, the question of the tower might be left in abeyance for a short time.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

SIR,—

9th February, 1915.

An inspection of the New Plymouth Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 2nd 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 the brigade.

The motor hose-tender was turned out, and various drills performed in a satisfactory manner. A test was made of the flow of water from the 4 in. main in Powderham Street, when, with a pressure of 114 lb. through one delivery of a regulation standpipe, a flow of 260 gallons per minute was registered; this output is less than it should be, pointing to some obstruction in the mains, probably corrosion.

In company with the Chairman of the Board, &c., an inspection was made of the new Central Fire-station now in course of erection, and several recommendations were made, of which the principal are as follows: The walls of the watchroom to be plastered; a charging board to be installed; the asphalt floor at present proposed to be laid down in the engine-house is not substantial enough for the new motor-pump machine to stand upon, and either the whole of this floor should be constructed of concrete or a solid runway laid down from the front to the back door to carry the machine.

Upon the removal of the bell-tower from the Eastern Station to the Central Station sites it will be necessary to lengthen the legs so that the mouth of the bell will hang just above the level of the apex of the roof of the new building.

In reply to your letter dated the 5th instant, *re* inspection of exhibits at the Timaru demonstration, I shall be pleased to report thereon as requested by your Board.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

Thos. L. Buxton, Esq., Secretary, Fire Board, New Plymouth.

The brigade is now in occupation of the new Central Station, erected with its frontage on Liardet Street. The building, which is of two storeys and of concrete construction, contains engine-house (48 x 31), social hall (48 x 31), four bedrooms for single men (14 ft. 11 in. x 9 in. 10 in. each), watchroom, workshop, &c., with necessary conveniences. A wooden house already on the section of land will be utilized as married quarters until such time as it is necessary to extend the main building. The Board has placed an order for a motor combination machine with an engine capable of developing 75 h.p., and fitted with a turbine pump having a pumping-capacity of 400 to 500 gallons per minute, a four-section 50 ft. extension ladder, and a first-aid pumping outfit; also the Board is calling for tenders for the installation of a street fire-alarm system.

During the year nine calls were received, of which number six proved to be actual fires—one less than occurred during the previous year. The attendance of members of the brigade at the eight calls for which a general alarm was given averaged 15.75 per call, or 75 per cent. of an average strength of twenty-one members.

The fire loss amounted to £341, as against £5,383 for 1913-14, a decrease of £5,042.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1915-16 is £1,200, as compared with £1,098 1s. 3d. for 1914-15, an increase of £101 18s. 9d.

OAMARU.

Two inspections of the Oamaru Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., the 6th October, 1914, and the 5th March, 1915. The two following reports, forwarded to the Secretary of the Board, cover the respective inspections:—

SIR,—

20th October, 1914.

An inspection of the Oamaru Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 6th instant, when there was present at the inspection muster the Superintendent and ten firemen—a good attendance in consideration of the fact that owing to some misunderstanding no notice was given to the members of the brigade until the same morning. The horse hose-wagon was turned out smartly, and various drills were carried out with the hand hose-reel.

The standpipes require lengthening, new shanks measuring 22 in. between the collars should be fitted to give the required length. A couple of hand-pumps fitted with stirrups should be provided, and a telephone should be placed in the dwelling of the fireman in charge of the North End reel-station.

I would suggest to your Board, in view of the inflammable nature of their stocks, with the heavy loss certain to follow should a "late call" be received by the brigade, that representations should be made to the proprietors or managers of the large stores such as Bullied's, North Otago Farmers' Co-operative, &c., with the object of inducing them to install in their respective buildings an automatic