

fire-alarm system directly connected with the fire-brigade station. As pointed out at the time of my visit, the reduction in the premiums allowed by the insurance companies on auto-detector protected risks will in the majority of cases more than pay the interest on the cost of installation.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

SIR,—

7th April, 1915.

An inspection of the Oamaru Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 5th ultimo, when there was present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and twelve firemen; these, with two on leave, representing the full strength of the brigade.

Certain dry drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner. The horse hose-and-ladder cart was taken to Reed Street for the purpose of testing the flow of water from the main. I understand that on the occasion of the fire at Graves's house in that street several minutes were lost in getting water through the hose, supposed to be caused by silting up in the main obstructing the flow. However, at the test the water came through clear and in good time; but in any case the pipes should be periodically blown out.

In view of the amount of property at risk the 1½ in. main in Aln Street should be replaced with 4 in. piping, and the circuit completed by connecting up with the Ouse Street main, also the 1 in. main at present laid down in Glen Street should be replaced with a 4 in. pipe.

After running the hose-and-ladder cart to Reed Street it was very apparent that the horse is altogether too light for the work, and, whilst new ladders are certainly required by the brigade, they could not be conveyed to a fire on the hose-cart under present conditions, owing to the extra weight involved.

I note that my previous recommendations as to lengthening the barrels of the standpipes and the provision of hand-pumps has not yet been carried out.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

The hand-pumps mentioned in my report of the 5th March have since then been supplied to the brigade. A permanent caretaker, with quarters at the Central Station, has been appointed.

During the year eleven calls were received, of which number nine proved to be for actual fires three less than occurred during the previous year. The attendance of members of the brigade at the eleven calls averaged 12.55 per call, or 78.44 per cent. of the total strength.

The fire loss amounted to £7,323, as against £2,661 for 1913-14, and increase of £4,662.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1915-16 is £477, as compared with £370 for 1914-15, and increase of £107.

PALMERSTON NORTH.

Two inspections of the Palmerston North Fire Brigade, its stations and equipment, have been made—viz., the 8th December, 1914, and the 27th April, 1915; also, following upon a request from the Borough Council, a special visit was paid on the 6th August for the purpose of inspecting and reporting upon the safety of the exit from the Palmerston North Opera House.

There was present at the first inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, sixteen firemen, and one messenger; these, with one on theatre duty and three on leave, accounted for twenty-three out of a total strength of twenty-four then on the roll. Various drills—motor, ladder, hose, &c.—were carried out in a very efficient manner. The stations and equipment are maintained in good order and condition.

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

SIR,—

10th May, 1915.

Following upon an inspection of the Palmerston North Fire Brigade and its equipment, I beg to submit the following report for consideration of your Board:—

At the inspection muster there was present the Superintendent and fifteen firemen; these, with two on theatre duty and six on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade then on the roll. Various motor, ladder, and hose drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner.

In confirmation of my interview with the Chairman of your Board and yourself, I recommend that tenders be called, together with fully detailed specifications, for the supply and instalment, except street-wiring, of a complete street fire-alarm system to consist of four circuits having twenty-three call-boxes in all.

The suggestion that a lighting and charging plant be installed at the Central Station is a very practical one, and I recommend that a plant similar to the Masterton one be installed.

I would direct the attention of your Board to the unprotected condition, owing to the non-supply of water, of several built-upon comparatively large portions of the town, as for instance in the north-west, on the Native reserve, and in the neighbourhood of the railway-station at Terrace End, but more particularly that section in the north-west portion known as "Bryant's Block," and the Borough Council should be asked to at once proceed with the extension of fire mains throughout the unprotected areas; also, according to the fire-brigade records of the last few months, during the daytime the average water-pressure ranges only from 50 lb. to 75 lb., at times less than 50 lb., presumably due to the increasing "draw off"; and for the purpose of improving the present pressure, as also in view of the necessary ex-