

SIR,—

4th May, 1915.

An inspection of the Timaru Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 19th ultimo, and in that connection I beg to submit the following report for the consideration of your Board :—

There was present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and twelve firemen; these, with two on leave, accounting for the total number (sixteen) then on the roll. The numerical strength of the brigade is not by any means excessive when the membership is fully up to the total authorized strength of twenty, and to maintain that number as available at all times the authorized strength should be increased to twenty-four.

The motor was turned out as for an alarm of fire received from Elizabeth Street, also runs were made over gradients in various parts of the town. The machine was well handled by the chaffeur, and due attention paid to the careful turning of the different corners negotiated. Various drills were carried out with the motor, as also with the new fire-escape ladder, and certain suggestions made at the time for the more efficient working of the latter. During the afternoon the motor was taken to a position at the head of No. 3 wharf for the purpose of testing the turbine pump. With a perpendicular lift of 15 ft. all three sections (30 ft.) of the suction hose were required to reach the water. There was some delay in showing water, and upon testing the vacuum in each length of suction a leakage was found in the connection between the second and third lengths. This was remedied, and the pump again started, when water was shown from the nozzle in 11 seconds. The pump pressure-gauge was tested and found correct, and with 100 ft. of 2½ in. unlined canvas hose and 1¼ in. nozzle two gauges on the pump registered 150 lb. with 68 lb. on the nozzle-gauge, thus showing a discharge of 322 gallons per minute. With two deliveries, 100 ft. of hose on each, one 1½ in. nozzle and one 1 in. nozzle, the pump-pressure was 100 lb., or a total discharge from the two nozzles of 432 gallons per minute. Altogether the various tests proved satisfactory, and the machine and its fittings in all respects equal to specifications, excepting only the set of accumulators that had been in use presumably had not been properly treated prior to packing for shipment, and in consequence arrived in a badly sulphuretted condition.

Three new branches and four (one of 1¼ in., one of 1½ in., and two of 1 in. diameter) new nozzles are required for the equipment of the motor, also provision should be made for the purchase of 500 ft. of new hose. As the price of hose has already risen 2d. per foot during the last three months, and my information is that further rises are to be expected, it would probably be good policy to purchase at present quotations.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

The brigade has been in occupation of the new Central Station in Latter Street since the beginning of the year. The building provides accommodation for eight single men, has two sets of married quarters, an engine-house 50 ft. by 32 ft., watchroom 15 ft. by 13 ft., and all necessary conveniences are provided; in fact, the station has been exceptionally well fitted out by the Board. An iron skeleton tower for bell, hose, and drill has been erected in the yard, and an electric motor fitted for ringing the bell.

The motor, hose, ladder, and turbine-pump combination-machine was received on the 15th March, and was put in commission two weeks later, and has already proved of great value as a fire appliance.

Forty calls were received during the year, of which number twenty proved to be actual fires—four more than occurred during 1913-14. The attendance of members of the brigade at the thirty-seven calls for which a general alarm was given was fifteen per call, or 88.24 per cent. of an average strength for the year of seventeen members—a very good record.

The fire loss for the year amounted to £3,129, as against £3,392 for 1913-14, a decrease of £263.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1915-16 is £1,450, as compared with £2,825 for 1914-15, a decrease of £1,375.

#### WHANGAREI.

Two inspections of the Whangarei Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., 11th November, 1914, and 14th May, 1915.

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

SIR,—

26th November, 1914.

An inspection of the Whangarei Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 11th instant, when there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and twelve firemen; these, with one on duty and two on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade then on the roll, three short of the authorized membership.

The outer station reel-sheds require attention, growth clearing away from the doors, &c.

I would recommend that until such time that your Board can see the way clear to install a modern street fire-alarm system, private telephones should be utilized as an auxiliary fire-alarm service, on the lines as explained at the time of my visit to Whangarei.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades,