

In respect to the new motor hose and chemical engine, as pointed out, in the first place the wheel-base is too short, but otherwise the body has been designed and built and the chemical cylinder with its fittings mounted all in a very practical and creditable manner, and with due care in working the machine should prove suitable for its purpose.

Prior to 1914 I found it necessary upon frequent occasions to adversely criticize the fire police in various matters affecting their efficiency. A change was made about that time and a better state of efficiency was apparent, but lately the older conditions again appear to prevail, and for the year ending the 30th June last the average attendance of members at calls throughout the year is far below that of any other body working under Fire Board jurisdiction, and, as will be seen above, out of a total of fifteen members only four attended the inspection muster; and I have to recommend to your Board that they should follow the same procedure as already adopted in several other places under like circumstances—that is, the fire police be disbanded as a body, and, say, six of the most suitable members of the disbanded corps be enrolled in the brigade, with special fire-police duties assigned to them, and thus increasing the authorized strength of the brigade from twenty-six to thirty-two all told. This proposed alteration, if adopted, will be found more efficient and economic in its results than is the present system of working.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

HAWERA.

Two inspections of the Hawera Brigade and its equipment have been made, on the 6th September, 1915, and the 24th January, 1916. At the first inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and seventeen firemen; these, with two on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade then on the roll. At the second inspection there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, thirteen firemen, and two messengers; these, with one on leave, accounting for eighteen out of twenty then on the roll. At both inspection drills the required practical work was carried out in a satisfactory manner, and, in fact, for some time past this brigade has given evidence of a considerable improvement in all-round efficiency.

The plant and appliances are maintained in good order and condition.

An ordinary touring motor-car has been hired for the time being at a very reasonable cost: it is housed at the central station, and utilized for carrying to fires a certain number of men, together with hose and other plant. The scheme is working very well, and will answer until such time as it is possible to purchase a properly constructed motor fire-appliance.

A street fire-alarm system has been installed, but at the time of my last visit was not entirely satisfactory; in any case the Superintendent requires more assistance than he had at that time to enable him to carry out the testing, &c., in a reliable manner.

HOKITIKA.

An inspection of the Hokitika Brigade, its station and equipment, was made on the 28th February, 1916. At the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and fifteen firemen; these, with six on leave, accounted for twenty-three out of twenty-eight then on the roll.

The engine was taken to the wharf and got to work. The way in which steam is got up and the pressure maintained in this very old type of fire-engine is very creditable to and shows more than usual ability on the part of those responsible for working it. The various drills were carried out in a satisfactory and efficient manner, and the different stations, with their equipment, are maintained in good order and condition.

LAWRENCE.

An inspection of the Lawrence Brigade and its equipment was made on the 23rd September, when there were present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and eight firemen; these, with one on leave, representing the then full strength of the brigade.

Various drills, wet and dry, were carried out in a satisfactory manner, and the station and equipment are maintained in good order and condition.

An improvement has been effected in the water-supply reticulation: a new 9 in. main has been laid along Irvine Street to Ross Place, and the old 4 in. and 3 in. mains have been lifted therefrom and laid up along Carlisle and Annan Streets.

MASTERTON.

Two inspections of the Masterton Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., 2nd December, 1915, and 1st June, 1916. At the first inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and twenty-seven firemen; these, with two on leave, representing the then total strength of the brigade. Certain contest and manual drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner.

At the second muster there were present the Superintendent and twenty-seven firemen; these, with four on leave, accounting for thirty-two out of thirty-three then on the roll. A turnout of the steam fire-engine was carried out smartly, and certain hose-reel drills performed in an efficient manner.