

OHAKUNE.

A visit was paid to Ohakune on the 11th May last for the purpose of inspecting the brigade and its equipment, but at the inspection muster called for the same evening only three men put in an appearance, and I was informed that six members comprised the total strength of the brigade. The equipment consists of an old, weatherbeaten, dilapidated open shed housing an old manual fire-engine with about 400 ft. of good hose; also, they possess a few buckets and a couple of hand chemical extinguishers. Added to the above I found the question of Fire Board *versus* Borough Council control was not then definitely settled; and, in fact, fire-protection matters in Ohakune appeared to be more or less in a state of chaos.

OAMARU.

Two inspections of the Oamaru Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., 21st September, 1915, and 2nd March, 1916. The following report, forwarded to the Secretary of the Board, covers the first inspection:—

SIR,—

18th October, 1915.

An inspection of the Oamaru Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 21st ultimo, and following is my report in that connection.

There were present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and eighteen firemen, these representing the full, lately increased, strength of the brigade. A turnout of the horse hose-and-ladder car was performed smartly, and various drills carried out in a satisfactory manner. A couple of lengths of the new hose recently purchased was tested with satisfactory results. The brigade should be provided with half a dozen canvas buckets.

I observe that a fire-hydrant has been fixed on the 3 in. main in the street off Thames Street leading to the Crown Roller Flour-mills, but I observe also that the hydrant has been placed only half-way along the street, instead of at or about the position as pointed out during my visit to Oamaru in November, 1913. My recommendation was made with a particular view to the better protection of the mills, and no other interests or risks are better served by the placing of the hydrant in its present position, whereas had it been fixed in the position recommended it would have been at least 150 ft. nearer to the object in view, with a corresponding greater efficiency in the fire-jets.

In my opinion the system of hydrant-indicators adopted for Thames Street is not a suitable one as at present carried out, and, if it is intended to continue that system in place of painting small squares on the kerb-edge, white tiles at least 10 in. in width with a bend of 6 in. deep should be let into the kerb.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

At the second inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and fourteen firemen; these, with four on leave, representing the full strength of the brigade.

The turnout of the horse hose-cart was performed smartly; the subsequent drills were not carried out in an altogether satisfactory manner, but considerable allowance must be made on account of the large number of new members, due first to the increase of membership from sixteen to twenty, and secondly to the number of enlistments—I believe seven in all—and I have no doubt that at my next inspection I shall find this brigade is again approaching its usual satisfactory state of efficiency.

PALMERSTON NORTH.

Two inspections of the Palmerston North Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., 26th October, 1915, and 13th June, 1916. At the first inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and twenty-one firemen; these, with two on duty and one on leave, representing the full strength of the brigade. At the second inspection there were present the Superintendent and sixteen firemen; these, with one on duty and four on leave, accounting for twenty-two out of a strength of twenty-four on the roll. At both inspections various drills, motor-ladder, rescue, and hose (both wet and dry) were carried out smartly and in a very efficient manner. The station and equipment are maintained in good order and condition.

Tenders were called and one was selected for the installation of a street fire-alarm system, but it was found that the tenderer could not proceed with the contract, and for various reasons the matter is in abeyance for the time being.

PETONE.

An inspection of the Petone Brigade and its equipment was made on the 18th May last, when there were present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and sixteen firemen, these accounting for eighteen out of a total strength of twenty. The turnout of the horse-drawn hose-and-ladder cart was unsatisfactory owing to the horse balking and delaying the start. Various drills, both wet and dry, were carried out in a satisfactory manner, and the station and equipment is maintained in good order and condition.

A new 30 h.p. commercial chassis has been purchased. It is intended to build a suitable body thereon and utilize it as a hose-and-ladder tender.