

these, with the Superintendent and two firemen on leave, accounting for the full strength of the brigade then on the roll.

Various wet and dry drills were carried out, during the course of which it was very evident the men required more instruction and drill; also, every effort should be made to bring the brigade up to its full authorized strength of fifteen.

Shortly before 9 a.m. on the morning of the 6th an alarm sounded on the firebell, and I estimated it was quite twelve minutes from the time the messenger started from the fire to give the alarm until the brigade arrived on the scene, accounted for as follows: First, the distance—over one-third of a mile—the messenger had to run to the firebell; second, delay in obtaining a motor vehicle to tow the hose-reel; third, delay caused by the brigade not knowing the locality of the fire. Fortunately the fire proved to be in a small detached, dilapidated outhouse; had it occurred in one of the larger wooden buildings it would certainly have obtained a good hold thereof before the brigade arrived. There was a good muster of the brigade, eight of its members being in attendance.

For the better protection of the town I now submit the following recommendations:—

A chassis to be purchased, and a suitable hose-tender body built thereon. The body may be built locally or otherwise as your Board may decide. I estimate the machine should be delivered at the fire-station complete for £325. Two siren fire-alarms worked by water-power to be installed, one towards the east end and the other towards the western end of the town. I estimate the cost of the sirens with turbines complete at £15 each. If your Board does not see its way to carry out the above recommendations in the immediate future the alternative is the building of a new fire-station in a more central position—say, on or about the site of the present firebell. A new fire-station more centrally situated and containing residential and sleeping quarters for a certain number of men will have to be built ultimately, but if the first-mentioned two recommendations are given effect to this last might remain in abeyance for the time being.

It is not possible by letter to explain my various recommendations and other matters in connection with the brigade in full detail, and it is to be regretted that after receiving due notice of my visit the local members of your Board, with the exception of the Chairman, did not make it convenient to meet me either on the evening of the inspection or during the following day. I would also point out in that connection that any apathy on the part of local members of a Fire Board will certainly react on the efficiency of their brigade.

In reference to my recommendation for the purchase of a motor-chassis, for your fuller information I enclose herewith an excerpt from my address given at the United Fire Brigades' Conference at Invercargill on the 5th instant.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

W. Carroll, Esq., Secretary, Fire Broad, Balclutha.

Only two fires, with an approximate loss of £2, occurred in the district throughout the year.

CHRISTCHURCH.

An inspection of the Christchurch Brigade, its several stations and equipment, was made on the 7th and 9th May last.

The turnouts were performed smartly, and the various drills carried out in a satisfactory manner; also, the stations and plant were found to be in good order and condition.

A new 45-50 horse-power motor machine, fitted with a 300-450-gallon turbine pump, a 35 ft. telescopic ladder, &c., was received from England and put into commission in February last; also, the Draeger smoke-helmet outfit has been received.

I have again to recommend that a 90 ft. mechanically operated fire-ladder be added to the equipment of the brigade.

During the year just ended eighty-four actual fires occurred in the district, as against seventy-five during the previous year, an increase of nine. The fire loss for 1918-19 amounted to £27,433, as compared with £29,860 for 1917-18, a decrease of £2,427.

DANNEVIRKE.

An inspection of the Dannevirke Brigade was made on the 9th June last, and in that connection the following is a copy of a report sent to the Secretary of the Board:—

SIR,—

18th June, 1919.

An inspection of the Dannevirke Brigade and its equipment was made on the 9th instant, when at the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, eleven firemen, and one messenger; these, with three on leave, accounting for seventeen out of the full strength of twenty-one then on the roll.

Various drills, both wet and dry, were carried out in a satisfactory manner, and the station and appliances are in good order.