

1947
NEW ZEALAND

FIRE BRIGADES OF THE DOMINION

(REPORT ON THE) BY THE INSPECTOR OF FIRE BRIGADES

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency

The INSPECTOR OF FIRE BRIGADES to the Hon. the MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS.
Office of the Inspector of Fire Brigades,
Wellington, 10th October, 1947.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the thirty-sixth annual report on the working of the Fire Brigades Act, 1926, for the year ending 31st March, 1947.

ADMINISTRATION

1. No new Fire Boards were created during the year and the number in operation remains at sixty. Several tentative applications for the formation of new Boards were made, but approval was deferred in view of the probability that the new legislation would be passed in the 1947 session. If this is not done, it will be necessary to review the whole question.

DOMINION FIRE WASTE

2. The insured fire loss in New Zealand for 1945, the latest year for which national figures have been prepared, was approximately £639,000. In past years the national loss has been estimated for the purpose of these reports by adding to the insurance pay-out an amount of 12½ per cent. to cover losses not insured. In 1945, however, there were two very large fires in Government stores (at Palmerston North and Te Awamutu) which together accounted for an uninsured loss of £660,000. The returns from fire districts show that the 12½ per cent. is, if anything, on the low side, so that the fire wastage for 1945 was certainly not less than £1,379,000. This is the heaviest loss since 1928. The fire district returns for 1946–47 in this report show that the losses in 1946 also have been high, and it is evident that the period of low losses which began in the depression and continued throughout the war years has come to an end.

3. Fire losses tend to run in cycles of high and low loss. The reasons for this are not clear. The cycles do not directly follow boom and depression periods, but probably have broad reference to economic conditions, varied in individual years by the incidence