

building? My Superintendent reports to me that a great many churches are very dangerous so far as egress in case of panic is concerned, and it is a doubtful point whether we have any control over churches. We are having a test case in order to see; but I should like to have churches included, because you would have just as serious a loss from panic in a church as in any theatre—probably more, because you would have so many women and children. The next clause I have had some debate and controversy upon with Superintendent Hugo—that is clause 22, subsection (4), (b), as to the power of the Superintendent; and I would like you to read clause (e) as well. This is what happened some time ago when the fire at Messrs. Kempthorne, Prosser, and Co.'s building occurred: Superintendent Hugo was away at the moment, but his deputy was at the fire. We had our steamer at work from the sea when a train came along. It was requested to stop, but the driver refused, and threatened to run over our hose. Nothing could be done, so we had to call off our men to uncouple the hose and to couple it up again after the train had passed. In less than a quarter of an hour it came back again, and we had to go through the performance once more. I do not know whether we have any power to stop His Majesty's mails, but think the Board should have control. We have municipal trams now, and they might be carrying letter-boxes bringing them under the definition of "His Majesty's mails," and I should like the Bill to give sufficient power to enable the Superintendent—because he is a gentleman who is going to have large power under this Bill—to control all the traffic. With regard to clause 28, I understand that that clause is to be amended. If it is not amended, the position, so far as Wellington is concerned at the present moment, is that we should hand over to the Board property of the value of £33,834. The land alone on which our central station stands is valued at £19,350, and the Newtown station land is valued at £1,200. I have a list here which I ask to be allowed to put in, as it was handed to me by the Town Clerk. The amendment I heard read as I came into the room this morning, if adopted, I think, will meet our difficulty.

12. *The Chairman.*] The clause you heard read was the clause which the Committee has to consider as to the mode of taking over the property. I think it will meet all that you demand. I believe our brigade in Auckland would be in exactly the same position as your brigade?—I do hope that the Bill will be amended so that it will effect all that is required, and that this Committee will be able to see its way to prevent all these little bodies having different control. If it could be done it would be well that there should be one, two, or three, or only very few large Fire Boards in New Zealand. You have to pay the members, and if you got good men you would find the whole of the fire brigade brought up to a state of excellence which is impossible with a number of small brigades. So far as the cities are concerned, you may find that you will have to leave them out, because if you put them into a large area they will have to pay very much in excess of what they would be called upon to pay for a body of their own. The cities would be controlled by outside bodies. The country, with all small boroughs, would be far more numerous, and would outvote the town; and, again, there is no doubt that the fire risk in a town is very much larger than in a small country district. The question you last referred to seems to me, after giving some consideration to the Bill and with a knowledge of its surroundings, to be the difficult point.

SIR,—

Town Clerk's Office, Wellington, 27th July, 1904.

I have to forward herewith for your information the cost of land, buildings, and plant in connection with the fire stations.

Land—						£	s.	d.
Central	..	..	..	..	..	19,350	0	0
Newtown	..	..	..	..	..	1,200	0	0
Buildings—								
Central	..	..	..	..	..	8,084	0	0
Newtown	..	..	..	..	..	1,895	0	0
Plant—								
Fire-engine	..	..	..	..	..	1,047	0	0
Fire-alarms	..	..	..	..	..	800	0	0
Fire-escape	..	..	..	..	..	236	0	0
Hose-reel	..	..	..	..	..	120	0	0
Horses	..	..	..	..	..	170	0	0
Hose and fittings	..	..	..	..	..	459	0	0
Hose-reel	..	..	..	..	..	73	0	0
Cart	..	..	..	..	..	74	0	0
Plant from Shand, Mason, and Co.	..	..	..	..	..	275	0	0
Fire-escape fittings	..	..	..	..	..	23	0	0
Water-heaters..	..	..	..	..	..	28	0	0
						£33,834	0	0

I have, &c.,
JOHN R. PALMER,
Town Clerk.

Councillor C. H. Izard, Chairman, Fire Brigade Committee.

FRIDAY, 12TH AUGUST, 1904.

JAMES GILBERD examined. (No. 3.)

1. *The Chairman.*] I believe you wish to give evidence before the Committee on this Bill?—Yes, sir.

2. Your name is?—James Gilberd.

3. And you live at?—Napier.

4. And you are?—Secretary of the United Fire Brigades Association, and Superintendent of the Napier Fire Brigade.

5. You have had a copy of this Bill?—Yes, sir.