

As bearing directly on this question of incendiarism and suspicious fires, and consequently as one efficient method towards reducing the excessive fire waste, the following extract taken from an English journal (*The Fireman*) is of interest:—

A paper published by the National Fire Protection Association gives the following interesting details of the working of the "Fire Marshal" system in the United States of America: "It transpires that in the States having a Fire Marshal's office and its detectives the conviction of fire-bugs is a comparatively easy task. In Ohio there have been more convictions for incendiarism during the two and one-half years of the existence of the Fire Marshal's Department than in the hundred years preceding its creation. This would seem to indicate the necessity of such a department if the fire-bug is to be properly looked after. The activity of county officers is so divided that they cannot give the attention necessary to tracing and convicting such criminals. Fire Marshal laws usually provide that the cause, origin, and circumstances of every fire in the State which damages property shall be investigated and reported to the Fire Marshal. The most important duty of the latter is the securing of evidence for the conviction of the incendiaries, and placing it in the hands of the Prosecuting Attorney of the county in which the crime is committed, officers of the Department who may have gathered the facts being present at the trial as witnesses. Perhaps the most important result of successful convictions by the Department is their deterrent effect, the knowledge that incendiaries are quickly pursued and usually punished operating to diminish the number of such crimes. Nine of the States now have Fire Marshal Departments, and in five the Commissioner of Insurance has the power of a Fire Marshal. As a manifestation of the quickening interest in this matter throughout the country, however, it is noted that Bills for the creation of such a Department are under consideration by the Legislatures now in session in eighteen of the States."

Appended are tables showing the annual cost of maintenance and the number of calls attended by each brigade, also the fire loss in each district.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

The Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs, Wellington.

SUMMARY OF FIRE CALLS.

District.	Fires.	Chimney Fires.	Rubbish Fires, &c.	False Alarms.	Out of District.	Total.
Auckland	75	13	7	29	8	132
Christchurch	86	5	5	97	11	204
Dannevirke	8	..	..	3	1	12
Dunedin	63	11	22	25	6	127
Feilding	7	3	..	1	1	12
Gisborne	32	..	..	1	1	34
Greymouth	8	..	..	..	..	8
Hastings	11	..	1	1	..	13
Hawera	..	..	..	..	..	Nil.
Hokitika	3	..	..	..	..	3
Lawrence	5	..	..	1	..	6
Maori Hill	4	..	..	..	..	4
Masterton	10	8	..	4	1	23
Milton	2	..	..	..	..	2
New Plymouth	8	..	1	..	1	10
Oamaru	5	..	1	1	1	8
Palmerston North	36	2	2	5	1	46
Petone	13	..	..	8	..	21
Whangarei	2	..	..	..	..	2
Totals	378	42	39	176	32	667