

OAMARU.

An inspection of the Oamaru Fire Brigade was held on the 29th September, 1909, when there were present—Deputy Superintendent and 11 firemen; with the Superintendent on leave.

A second inspection was held at 8 p.m. on the 11th March, 1910. Present—Superintendent, Deputy, and 12 firemen; with 1 on leave: all accounted for. The attendance at the musters was very good. The strength of the brigade is 15 all told.

Drills were performed in an efficient manner, with every appearance of good discipline.

The station and equipment are maintained in good order and condition.

Possession was taken of the new station in August last. It is a well designed and fitted-up stone structure of one story, contains ample accommodation, and should meet the requirements of Oamaru for many years to come. Firemen now sleep on the premises, and a horse is stabled there, and this should result in a smart turn-out in response to an alarm of fire. I noticed that a number of the fire hydrants were completely covered over with road-metal, and during the course of a drill the waterway of one hydrant was found to be covered over with a metal plate secured by a bolt and nut. I understand there are others in the same condition. These faults should be rectified at once.

I have to again recommend (see report dated 3rd March, 1909) the placing of a small reel-shed and bell somewhere towards the north end of Thames Street, the shed to be equipped with reel, hose, hydrant, and ladders.

During the year ending 30th June, 1910, 5 fires have occurred in the Oamaru Fire District, as against 25 for the previous year, a decrease of 20.

The loss by fire amounted to £523, as against £4,180, a decrease of £3,657.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1910–11 is £500, as against £538 for 1909–10, a decrease of £38.

PALMERSTON NORTH.

Two inspections of the Palmerston North Fire Brigade have been held—viz., on 27th August, 1909, and 27th January, 1910, respectively. The attendance of members of the brigade at both musters was very satisfactory. Of the Fire Police Corps there were only the captain and four constables present at the first inspection, but since then it has been considered expedient to disband that corps and increase the strength of the brigade, which now numbers 28 all told—viz., Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and 26 firemen.

The various drills were carried out efficiently, and apparently good discipline is maintained.

The plant and appliances are in good order and condition.

The Fire Board has made considerable improvement in fire-brigade matters in Palmerston, the principal item being the erection, on a suitable site in Cuba Street, of a two-story Central Station, that is now nearly ready for occupation. Other minor additions and alterations have been made to the equipment of the brigade, and the question of further improvement is under consideration.

During the year ending 30th June, 1910, 36 fires have occurred in the Palmerston Fire District, as against 32 for the previous year, an increase of 4.

The loss by fire amounted to £21,535, as against £17,306, an increase of £4,229.

There was a run of serious fires in the early part of April, a number being attributed to incendiarism. Of the total number of fires for the year (36), the Superintendent has returned the origin of no less than 9 as being due to that cause.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1910–11 is £1,504, as against £1,436 for 1909–10, an increase of £68.

PETONE.

In addition to other visits in connection with brigade matters, an inspection of the Petone Fire Brigade was held on the 10th February, 1910, when there were present—Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, 16 firemen, and 2 messengers; with 1 on sick-leave: all accounted for. The total strength of the brigade is Superintendent, Deputy, 17 firemen, and 2 messengers.

The attendance at the muster was very good, and the various drills performed were carried out efficiently. Station and appliances are maintained in good order and condition.

The new street fire-alarm installation has given satisfaction.

A number of improvements in the matter of fire protection have been made in the Petone Fire District, including the purchase of a horse and four-wheeled hose-and-ladder cart. Constructive alterations have been made at the station, whilst other minor matters have been attended to; but I have again to call attention to the necessity for the erection of a new station that will provide sleeping-accommodation for a certain number of firemen.

During the course of the year ending 30th June, 1910, 13 fires have occurred, as compared with 6 for the previous year, an increase of 7.

The loss by fire amounted to £2,266, as against £1,529, an increase of £737.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1910–11 is £657 7s. 5d., as against £915 4s. 11d. for 1909–10, a decrease of £259 17s. 6d.