

During the past year 4 fires have occurred in the Greymouth Fire District, as against 8 during the previous year, a decrease of 4.

The fire loss amounted to £1,363, compared with £2,326, a decrease of £963.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1911–12 is £850 6s., as against £806 4s. for the year 1910–11, an increase of £44 2s.

HASTINGS.

Two inspections of the Hastings Fire Brigade and Fire Police Corps and their equipments have been held—10th October, 1910, and 20th March, 1911.

Following are two interim reports forwarded to the secretary of the Hastings Fire Board, covering both inspections :—

“ SIR,—

“ Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 31st October, 1910.

“ I have the honour to submit for the consideration of your Board the following report in connection with my inspection, on the 10th instant, of the Hastings Fire Brigade and Fire Police, with their plant, appliances, &c.

“ The attendance at the muster of the members of the brigade—viz., 24 and 1 on leave out of the total strength of 25—was very satisfactory.

“ The attendance of members of the Fire Police—11 out of a total strength of 21—was very unsatisfactory. By reference to my two previous reports it will be seen that there has been no satisfactory attendance of the Fire Police at any of my inspections.

“ It was stated at the roll-call that the officers of both brigade and police only received notice of my intended inspection at 10 a.m. on the morning in question, but as the letter informing you of my proposed visit was posted in Wellington on the 6th instant these officers should have received earlier notice.

“ An ordinary wet steamer drill was carried out in a satisfactory manner.

“ The plant and appliances of both brigade and police is maintained in good order and condition.

“ I would recommend that the Fire Police should turn out for practice, carrying out their own drill, at the same time and in conjunction with the brigade.

“ During the course of my inspection, upon asking to see the ambulance-box, which, I understand, in accordance with my recommendation, your Board had purchased some time previously, the captain of the Fire Police informed me that they had not yet been supplied with one.

“ I would direct the attention of your Board to the following recommendation contained in my report dated 12th October, 1909 : ‘ If there is no prospect of installing the gravitation high-pressure system in the immediate future, concrete tanks should at once be put down at various suitable points in the town, so that water to supply the fire-engine will be immediately available in case of necessity.’

“ I have, &c.,

“ THOS. T. HUGO,

“ Inspector of Fire Brigades.”

“ SIR,—

“ Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 31st March, 1911.

“ At 8 p.m., Monday, the 20th instant, I held an inspection of the Hastings Fire Brigade and Fire Police Corps.

“ Of the brigade there were present—Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, 22 firemen, and 3 messengers, or 27 out of a total strength of 30 on the roll ; of the 3 absent, 1 was on sick-leave, 1 on leave, and 1 out of the district.

“ Of the Fire Police Corps there were present—Captain, Lieutenant, and 18 constables, or 20 out of a total strength of 21 ; the 1 absent was on sick-leave.

“ The attendance of both brigade and Fire Police was very satisfactory.

“ At 8.12 p.m. I instructed the Superintendent to get the fire-engine to work from the sump at the intersection of Heretaunga Street and Karamu Road. The pressure-gauge on the engine indicated 100 lb. of steam at 8.22 p.m., but it was not until 8.30–50 p.m., or 19 minutes from the time of call, that sufficient water had backed up to enable the engine to get to work. I then directed the Superintendent to move the engine to the sump at the intersection of Heretaunga and Warren Streets. The trap-door was lowered, and the engine ready for work at 8.41 p.m., but it was 9.3–40 p.m., an interval of nearly 23 minutes, before one delivery could be got to work, and even then sufficient water had not gathered to cover the suction strainer, and as a consequence the resulting jet was a mixture of air and water. Presumably it would have required some minutes longer to obtain an efficient stream, but, not wishing to play any more of this water on the street than was absolutely necessary, I did not carry the experiment any further.

“ Seeing that once a fire gets beyond the limited capacity of the chemical engine these sumps have got to be relied upon to supply the necessary water, it must be apparent to your Board that the above statement reveals a most serious state of affairs. I understand it is possible to always keep a certain amount of water in the sewers, and I would suggest that arrangement should be made to have this matter attended to at once, coupled with a reliable supervision. In connection with this subject, I would direct your attention to my report, dated 12th October, 1909—that portion headed ‘ Means for extinguishing fires.’

“ It is necessary that your Board should make by-laws dealing with the status of the Fire Police, &c., but this and other matters were the subject of conversation between your Chairman and myself during my visit to Hastings, and doubtless he has already laid them before you.