

SIR,—

1st May, 1913.

In connection with my visit to Gisborne on the 23rd and 25th ultimo, I have the honour to forward the following report for the consideration of your Board:—

At the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and eighteen firemen: these, with three on leave, accounted for twenty-three out of a total strength of twenty-five then on the roll. Certain parts of the uniform of the men on parade, as commented upon at the time, were not in a creditable condition. The motor hose and chemical car was taken for a quick run along Gladstone Road as far as Roebuck Road and back, and the chemical engine subsequently got to work.

I find the motor-car is still being very much neglected. There is no systematic supervision, and evidently very little attention is being paid to either my reports or verbal recommendations in that connection. Whilst running along Gladstone Road at a fast speed the siren proved to be out of adjustment, and all the lights went out, due to the accumulators having run down—this in face of the fact that in my report, dated the 16th January, appears the following recommendation: "The accumulators should be tested daily." Had this been acted upon such a dangerous occurrence would not have happened. Up to noon of the next day nothing had been done to remedy the fault. The clips for the front springs, supposed to be ready in January last, had not been placed in position. The covers of the oil-cups over the front springs, that had been knocked off some little time previously, had not been replaced. The engine-starting arrangements are still unsatisfactory, and a priming-tank, connected with the induction-pipe, should be fixed on the dashboard, also a lever connected with the air-valve. The special buffer springs, the subject of a previous recommendation, should be fitted on the front axle. Opening the hose-box I saw nine lengths of roughly coiled hose therein, and found that there is not sufficient hose in reserve to recharge the car when required, and 1,000 ft. of new hose and ten pairs of new couplings are required immediately. The box should be charged with hose to the amount and flaked down in the manner as fully explained, and spare coils of 50 ft. lengths of hose carried in the side boxes.

The caretaker working under present arrangements has not sufficient time at his disposal to attend to the brigade plant and appliances in a proper manner, and he should be allowed more time for that purpose.

Altogether matters generally, in an administrative sense, are in an unsatisfactory state, and in my opinion the occupation by one person of the dual position of Chairman of the Board and Superintendent of the brigade is not conducive to the efficiency and discipline of the service. After most careful consideration, other and more detailed reasons for my decision were given to members of your Board at the meeting held on the 25th ultimo, I consider it my duty to strongly recommend that the Chairman of your Board should relinquish the position of Superintendent of your Board's brigades.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

The brigade received forty-one calls during the last year, of which twenty-eight proved to be actual fires, as against twenty-two fires for the previous year, an increase of six. The attendance of members of the brigade averaged 17.7 per call, or 70.6 per cent. of the total strength.

The fire loss for the year amounted to £5,940, compared with £5,860 for 1912, an increase of £80.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1913-14 is £789 10s. 3d., as against £382 19s. 10d. for 1912-13, an increase of £406 10s. 5d.

GREYMOUTH.

Two inspections of the Greymouth Fire Brigade, its stations and equipment, have been made—viz., 24th October and 5th March. The following two reports, forwarded to the secretary of the Board, cover the respective inspections:—

SIR,—

1st November, 1912.

In connection with my recent inspection of the Greymouth Fire Brigade and its equipment, I have the honour to forward report for the consideration of your Board:—

Arrangements were made for the members of the brigade to be at their respective homes at 7.15 p.m. on the evening of the 24th ultimo, when the bell recently hung in the newly erected tower at the central fire-station was rung for the purpose of testing to what extent the bell is audible in different parts of the town. The subsequent reports made were not very favourable; but I am of opinion that if the swinging of the bell is stopped, and the top pulleys shifted, as pointed out at the time, more favourable results will be obtained.

At the muster held at 8 p.m. the same evening there were present the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and seventeen firemen: these, with one on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade—a satisfactory attendance.

The steamer was got to work from the suction-pipes on the wharf opposite Tainui Street. The fire was lit at 8.4 p.m., and 100 lb. of steam was registered on the pressure-gauge at 8.15.15 p.m. The engine was then started, and two good jets of water, from one 1 in. and one $\frac{7}{8}$ in. nozzle, was shown at 8.16 p.m.—a good result.

An electric 6 in. trembler bell and relay shutter should be fixed in the engine-house, and a push-button enclosed in a small box with a glass front fixed outside, all placed in the positions as indicated; the box to be lighted at night-time by means of a small gas-jet, and lettered as follows: "In case of fire, break glass and press button."