

pressure of 88 lb. to 89 lb. should not be available within ten minutes or less from the time the alarm is given. The weakest part of the water-supply is the volume, which the above experiments proved to be quite inadequate to successfully deal with a fire of any magnitude. The Borough Council should be urged to push on with the intended improvements. I note the later suggestions of the Borough Engineer increase the storage-capacity of the elevated tanks to 150,000 gallons. During the course of the above-mentioned experiments two double-headed stand-pipes only recently purchased became disabled, the head of one being completely blown off the shank, and the other splitting about half-way up the shank.

The chemical engine then just recently purchased is not, either in design or construction, suited to the local requirements, and the price paid was excessive. I consider an error was made in the purchase of the machine in question, particularly in view of my letter dated 7th October, wherein I reported that a number of these engines had been manufactured in the Dominion that compared equally well both in construction and price with the best of the imported articles, and they had for years given every satisfaction to the purchasers, giving at the same time, for reference purposes, the names of eight brigades then using them.

The following report deals with my second visit :—

SIR,—

29th January, 1913.

Herewith I have the honour to forward a report in connection with my recent inspection of the Hawera Fire Brigade and its equipment.

At the inspection muster held on the 21st ultimo there were present the Deputy Superintendent and sixteen firemen; these, with three absent on Territorial duty and four on leave, accounted for twenty-four out of a total strength of twenty-seven then on the roll.

Wet drills were carried out in a fairly satisfactory manner, but new washers are required on the stand-pipes, and the street hydrant opposite the Borough Council Chambers is out of order. Couplings should be turned into the remainder of the new hose, and to complete this six new couplings (female half only) are required.

The water-pressure is very low, during the time of my visit registering as follows: 21st January—8 p.m., 48 lb.; 9.45 p.m., 55 lb.: 22nd January—9 a.m., 40 lb.; 10.40 a.m., 47 lb.

I noticed there are a large number of garden-hoses distributed throughout the town, and, as the low water-pressure, combined with its small volume, has assumed a very serious aspect from a fire-protection point of view, I would recommend that your Board should at once suggest to the Borough Council the urgent necessity of prohibiting the use of all hoses, at any rate until such time that there is an improvement in the pressure.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

At the time of my second visit in January last the work in connection with the improvement of the borough water-supply was in hand, and considerable progress had been made with the erection of the water-tower. Also, alterations had been made in the ringing-mechanism of the fire-bell, and more satisfactory results were being obtained.

During the year five fires occurred in the district, or one more than during the previous year. Eight calls in all were received, and the attendance of members of the brigade at seven (No. 1 omitted), averaged 19.86 per call, or 79.6 per cent. of the total strength.

The fire loss amounted to £1,772, as compared with £14,790 for 1912, a decrease of £13,018.

The estimated cost of the Brigade for the year 1913-14 is £617 16s., as against £509 15s. 9d. for 1912-13, an increase of £108 0s. 3d., due to providing for part of the cost of installing a street fire-alarm system.

HOKITIKA.

Two inspections of the Hokitika Fire Brigade, its stations, and appliances have been made—viz., 23rd October, 1912, and 6th March, 1913.

At the first inspection there were present the Superintendent and eighteen firemen: these, with five on leave, accounted for twenty-four out of a total strength of twenty-seven then on the roll. Various drills, both wet and dry, were carried out in a smart and efficient manner.

The following report, forwarded to the secretary of the Board, covers the second inspection :—

SIR,—

14th March, 1913.

An inspection of the Hokitika Fire Brigade station and equipment was held on the 6th instant, when there were present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and nineteen firemen: these, with six on leave, accounted for twenty-seven out of twenty-eight then on the roll.

Various practice drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner, but in one instance considerable delay was experienced in locating the street hydrant owing to its being a little below the road-level, and consequently covered with sand, dry mud, &c. I noticed that more than one of the hydrants about the town are in the same condition, and the Borough Council should be asked to give immediate attention to the matter, as such conditions might be the cause of serious loss in case of fire.

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

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.