

At the second inspection there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and eleven firemen: these, with one on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade then on the roll—a satisfactory attendance.

A new semi-rotary manual pump, having a capacity of about 25 gallons per minute, had recently been purchased. This was got to work, but proved to be but little better than the older ones; and in fact, owing to the very small results obtained from the exhaustive work required, it is comparatively useless as a fire-brigade appliance. Notwithstanding the heavy fire loss of last year, up to the time of my last visit, beyond the purchase of the inadequate pump mentioned above, nothing had been done towards providing the brigade with any better means of extinguishing fires, although I understand the Borough Council then had under consideration a scheme for the installation of a water-supply by means of a pumping high-pressure system. No hand-pumps have yet been provided.

Two fires have occurred in the district during the past year, the same number as during the previous year.

The average attendance of the brigade at fires was fourteen, or 93·3 per cent. of the strength.

The fire loss amounted to £1,301, as against £14,891.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1913-14 is £120, the same as for 1912-13.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

Three inspections of the New Plymouth brigades, their stations and equipment, have been made—viz., New Plymouth on 19th November, 1912, and 6th May, 1913; Fitzroy section on 20th November, 1912; also a special visit was made to New Plymouth on the 12th August.

At the first inspection there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and twenty-six men: these, with one absent, accounted for the full strength. Second inspection, present—Superintendent, Deputy, and twenty-two men: these, with one on duty and one on leave, accounted for twenty-six out of twenty-eight then on the roll. At the inspection of the Fitzroy section there were present the Captain, Lieutenant, and thirteen firemen; with one on leave this accounted for the full strength. The attendance at all musters and drills was very satisfactory.

Various hose, reel, and ladder drills, both wet and dry, were carried out in an efficient manner, and the stations and appliances are maintained in good order and condition.

At each of my visits a conference has been held with the Board, chiefly in reference to the suggested scheme for the fire protection of Greater New Plymouth, such as the erection of new stations upon the sites already acquired, the purchase of motor and other appliances, &c. (see annual report for 1912); but up to the present, beyond preparing of station plans and obtaining tenders for motor machines, nothing further has been done, stated to be consequent upon the difficulty of obtaining loan-money for the purpose of carrying out the proposed scheme.

The number of fires that occurred in the district was nine, or three more than during the previous year. The brigade received ten calls, and the attendance of members averaged 19·2 per call, or 68·2 per cent. of the total strength.

The fire loss amounted to £13,768, as compared with £760 for the previous year, an increase of £13,008.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1913-14 is £1,098 1s. 3d., as against £1,058 0s. 3d., an increase of £40 1s. The estimates include a sum of £307 18s. 7d. to provide for the installation of street fire-alarm system.

OAMARU.

Two inspections of the Oamaru Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., 17th and 18th September, 1912, and 4th February, 1913. The following report, forwarded to the secretary of the Board, covers the first inspection:—

SIR,—

Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 4th October, 1912.

An inspection of the Oamaru Fire Brigade and its equipment, &c., was made on the 17th and 18th ultimo, and I have the honour to submit the following report for the consideration of your Board in connection therewith:—

There were present at the inspection muster the Superintendent, Deputy, and eleven firemen: these, with three on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade.

A turnout was effected and various exercises carried out in a satisfactory manner.

A series of readings was taken of the standing pressure in the 10 in. water-main in Thames Street and the 4 in. main in Wear Street, and the comparisons made showed that the new gauge purchased for the brigade is correct, but that the gauge in the Borough Council Chambers is weak to the extent of registering 8 lb. above the actual pressure. Whilst the above-mentioned readings were being taken several of the street hydrants were found to be in a defective condition.

The new nozzles recently obtained are unnecessarily heavy in construction and not of the best design; one in particular is very defective, and I purpose having it replaced.

I would again bring under the notice of your Board the necessity of erecting a small hose-reel shed and bell towards the north end of Thames Street—a reel with hose, branch, stand-pipe, and ladders to be placed there; also, it will be presently necessary to provide a similar equipment at some position on the hills to the southward of the central fire-station.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.