

PETONE.

Two inspections of the Petone Fire Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., 3rd January and 30th June. The two following reports, forwarded to the secretary of the Board, cover the respective inspections:—

SIR,—

16th January, 1913.

In connection with my visit to Petone on the 3rd instant for the purpose of inspecting the fire brigade and its equipment, I have the honour to forward the following report for the consideration of your Board:—

At the inspection muster there were present only the Superintendent, Deputy, five firemen, and one messenger. The holiday season not having terminated was given as the principal reason for the small attendance, a number of the men being absent from the town.

The horse hose-reel was turned out and the new telescopic ladder was got to work, but on account of the small muster any further practice was postponed until a later date.

The new horse appears to me to be a little light for the work it will be called upon to perform.

The four-wheeled hose-cart has, in my opinion, always been somewhat top-heavy, and now that the new telescopic ladder has been mounted at a considerable height above this body it has still further increased the unsuitability of the vehicle, therefore great care must be exercised when driving to fires, particularly when rounding corners, otherwise a bad accident will be the result.

For various reasons, and particularly that of liability to accident, I consider the fire-alarm indicator and electrical fittings are placed in a very unsuitable position; the watch-room is the proper place for them.

The maximum water-pressure registered during my visit was 64 lb.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

SIR,—

Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 1st July, 1913.

I have the honour to inform you that I held an inspection of the Petone Fire Brigade and its equipment on the evening of the 30th ultimo, and following is a report thereon forwarded for consideration of your Board:—

At the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, thirteen firemen, and two messengers: these, with two on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade—viz., nineteen all told.

Instructions were given for the brigade to get to work at a two-story building in Jackson Street. Considerable time was lost in showing water on the first delivery, caused to some extent by difficulty in locating and opening the street-hydrant; but in any case the system of getting to work that requires the laying-out of some 300 ft. of hose, instead of picking up and using a hydrant on the same-sized main that is within 70 ft. of the supposedly burning building, is wrong in practice, and should be altered. Not only is there loss of time in laying out extra hose, but consequent loss of pressure, and that in Petone is a serious matter, and in this particular instance was accentuated by some very leaky couplings; also, the two branches used are of faulty construction and leaked badly.

In order to test what length of time was required to secure the extra water-pressure, the turncock at the reservoir was rung up at 9.9 p.m. and instructed to give all the available pressure. At that time the gauge at the central station was registering 69 lb., at 9.19 p.m. the pressure rose to 71 lb., but at 9.55 p.m., forty-six minutes after the instructions were given, the pressure had not risen to more than 72 lb.

In reference to the hose and ladder wagon, the lowering of the body, in the way of decreasing the height between the axles and the load-line, to the extent you mention in your letter of the 25th ultimo, must result in a very considerable gain in stability in a vehicle of that particular description, but great care must be exercised in carrying out the necessary alterations.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

There is sleeping-accommodation provided at the central station for six single men, but at the time of my last visit only two were sleeping on the premises, though it is hoped to remedy this shortly. A 35 ft. telescopic ladder, carried on the horsed hose-wagon, has been added to the equipment. The Board have decided to appoint a second permanent man, and also to connect the houses of the non-resident firemen with the central station by means of electric call-bells—a good system when carried out with discrimination and under a suitable agreement or regulations, otherwise a source of continual expense, as proved in a number of cases. There is no improvement in the pressure of water available for fire purposes. A message was sent (see report above, dated 1st July) to the turncock at the reservoir requesting him to turn on the reserve pressure, and after waiting forty-six minutes there was a rise of only 3 lb. on the gauge.

The average attendance of brigadesmen at fourteen calls (No. 12 omitted) was 12.6 per call, or 66.2 per cent. of the full strength.

The brigade has attended fifteen calls, that included ten actual fires—the same number of fires as during last year.

The fire loss amounted to £593, as against £3,209, a decrease of £2,616.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1913-14 is £847 16s. 10d., compared with £1,247 7s. 6d. for 1912-13, a decrease of £399 10s. 8d.