

Featherston Camp—7th December, 1916: Inspection purposes, &c.
 Featherston Camp—12th January, 1917: Inspection purposes, &c.
 Featherston Camp—13th February, 1917: Inspection purposes.
 Balclutha—12th to 14th March, 1917: Attendance at United Fire Brigades Conference.
 Akaroa—27th March, 1917: Report upon storage of dangerous goods, water-supply, &c.
 Trentham Camp—11th May, 1917: Inspection purposes.
 Trentham Camp—11th June, 1917: Inspection purposes.

Inspection visits have not been made as frequently as in the past, in some part due to the better equipment and greater efficiency of a number of the brigades making it not now necessary to visit them, except for special purposes, more than once during the year, but chiefly owing to a great part of my time now being occupied in carrying out other duties following upon my appointment as Departmental Fire Inspector and Honorary Fire Inspector to the Defence Department.

Having received an invitation from the executive officers of the United Fire Brigade Association, I attended their annual conference held at Balclutha in March last and delivered an address to the delegates on "The Domestic Hot-water Service as a Cause of Fire." At the request of the Conference the address has been printed by the Government in pamphlet form for circulation amongst the brigades and local governing bodies.

As usual, instruction and addresses upon various subjects in connection with fire-brigade work was given at the conclusion of the inspection drills. Advice has been given to local bodies and others in relation to water-supply schemes, fire risks and protection, purchase of fire plant, &c. Imported machinery has been tested, specifications drawn up, and supervision exercised over the manufacture of plant and appliances in the Dominion.

The principal improvements effected during the year are as follows:—

Fire-stations—Auckland: Additions and alterations have been made to the Grey Lynn fire-reel station to provide a set of married quarters and suitable accommodation for single men.

Dunedin: A district station has been erected and is now in occupation in South Dunedin. The new station is designed to serve the Caversham and St. Clair districts in addition to South Dunedin. The building is constructed in brick, and contains one set of married quarters, accommodation for six single men, commodious engine-room, social hall, &c., and all necessary conveniences.

Feilding: Additions and alterations have been made at the central station so as to provide one set of married quarters.

Hamilton: A new central station has been erected and is now in occupation. The building contains one set of married quarters, accommodation for single men, large engine-room, social hall, &c., and all necessary conveniences.

Woolston: A new central station has been erected and is now in occupation. The building contains one set of married quarters, accommodation for single men, engine-room, social hall, &c., and all necessary conveniences.

New Motor Appliances.—Dunedin: Three new 60 h.p. motor hose machines all fitted with telescopic ladders and first-aid pumping outfit.

Feilding: A 25 h.p. commercial chassis purchased and a suitable body built thereon, converting it into a hose tender.

Hamilton: The 65 h.p. motor appliance which had been on order for some time was received in January last. The machine is fitted with a 400–500-gallon turbine pump, and carries a three-section 50 ft. wheeled telescopic ladder.

New Plymouth: The 65 h.p. motor appliance was received in January last. The machine is fitted with a 400–500-gallon turbine pump, a three-section 50 ft. wheeled telescopic ladder, and a first-aid pumping outfit.

Hawera: A 35 h.p. commercial chassis was purchased and the machine converted into a hose-and-ladder tender, a body suitable for the purpose being built locally.

Whangarei: A 20 h.p. (English rating) second-hand motor-car was purchased and converted into a hose-and-ladder tender.

Fire-alarms.—An electric system of modified street alarms directly connected up to the main firebell has been installed in Whangarei. The system, which also enables the number of the ward or district to be rung out, and is economical and very suitable for the smaller places, has proved most successful in Whangarei, and is now being installed in several other towns.

Considerable difficulty has been experienced by nearly all the brigades in keeping their personnel up to an effective strength, this applying to the whole fire service of the Dominion. In the "Roll of Honour" book published by the United Fire Brigade Association it states that up to the end of February last 1,030 of its members had enlisted, and of that number 87 has been killed, 116 wounded, 2 were prisoners of war, and 66 invalided home and unfit.

A recommendation was made last year in certain towns where this difficulty occurred that a number of the business people should be asked to undergo a sufficient amount of drill to enable them to assist the brigade when necessary. The idea worked successfully, and in view of eventualities I would suggest to the chief officers of brigades throughout New Zealand that they should at once request men over military age or those otherwise ineligible for military service, including well-grown youths under military age, to volunteer for brigade work. There are many men over military age still hale and active who I am sure would be only too glad to show their patriotism in this respect if the way was open for them to do so.

Following are detailed reports dealing with each fire district.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.