

DETAILED REPORTS.

AUCKLAND.

An inspection of the Auckland Brigade, its stations and equipment, was made on the 10th and 16th April, when the several stations, plant, and appliances were found to be in good order and condition, and the various turnouts and inspection drills were carried out in a smart and efficient manner.

For the proper protection of the city I found it necessary to make the following recommendations: First, purchase of a site for a new fire-station in Ponsonby Road, at the corner of Lincoln Street; second, erection of a district station on the above-mentioned site, to include six sets of married quarters, on the lines of the pencil sketch submitted; third, erection of two sets of married quarters at the Remuera Station; fourth, purchase of 1,000 ft. of rubber-lined hose; fifth, provision of a second telephone at the central fire-station. I had also to call attention to the unsatisfactory conditions in respect to the street fire-hydrant indicators.

BALCLUTHA.

An inspection of the Balclutha Brigade and its equipment was made on the 22nd February, when fourteen members of the brigade out of a total strength of fifteen were in attendance. The various practice drills were carried out in fairly satisfactory manner, and showed considerable improvement as compared with all the work performed at the time of my previous visit.

I found the brigade was in possession of only 600 ft. of serviceable hose, and recommended that another 500 ft. at least be obtained immediately, also six collapsible canvas buckets. I noticed a number of the street fire-hydrants were overgrown with grass.

CHRISTCHURCH.

An inspection of the Christchurch Fire Brigade, its stations and equipment, was made on the 20th and 22nd March. Various drills with the motor-pump, fire-escape, ladders, &c., were carried out in a satisfactory manner. The central and district stations, together with the plant and appliances, were found in good order and condition.

For the more adequate protection of the city I consider it necessary to make the following recommendations: Erection of a substation in the vicinity of the North Avon Road; extension of the street fire-alarm system; provision of a mechanically operated 90 ft. fire-ladder; provision of a runabout motor.

DANNEVIRKE.

An inspection of the Dannevirke Brigade was made on the 17th May, when eighteen members of the brigade were present. Various drills were carried out in a fairly satisfactory manner. Suggestions for improvement in this respect were made to the officers of the brigade.

I had to repeat my recommendation that a 35 ft. trussed telescopic ladder be procured and carried on the motor hose-tender; also that the installation of a street fire-alarm installation be taken in hand, and the brigade provided with a couple of gas-masks.

DARGAVILLE.

An inspection of the Dargaville Brigade was made on the 14th April, when fifteen out of the seventeen members of the brigade were present. Various drills were carried out in a smart and efficient manner, and the main station and appliances were in good order and condition.

Since my last visit nothing had been done to improve the equipment of the brigade, and I had to repeat my previous recommendation that a 1-ton motor-truck be purchased, and a body built thereon suitable for the transport of men and appliances; also the brigade to be provided with the following smaller equipment—viz., one hand-pump, two gas-masks, and a hose-repairing outfit.

DUNEDIN.

An inspection of the Dunedin Brigade, its stations and equipment, was made on the 26th and 28th February. At the inspection muster at headquarters there were on parade twenty-two officers and men; also, a contingent of the South Dunedin section, consisting of one officer and five firemen, took part in the practice drill carried out at Hayman's Buildings, and which was performed in a very smart and efficient manner. All stations and equipment were found to be in good order and condition.

For the more efficient protection of the city I deemed it necessary to make the following recommendations: Increase the permanent staff; provide more married quarters; provide better protection in the North-east Valley, Mornington, and Anderson's Bay districts, also the question of better protection of the harbour-front; extension of the street fire-alarm system; manning and equipment of the Roslyn substation. In reference to the latter, the Roslyn Station has since been placed in commission.

On that part of the above recommendation relating to the provision of adequate protection in the North-east Valley, Mornington, and Anderson's Bay districts the Board comments as follows: "Except for certain outlying portions difficult of access under any conditions, the main portions of these districts are all within a ten-minutes run from existing stations, and the provision of local stations in each would not, on the average, reduce this time to under five minutes. The expense of establishing and maintaining such stations would very greatly exceed any saving in value destroyed that might be effected thereby, and it is not considered necessary to provide such until the building values of areas referred to are largely increased. Extensions of the street-alarm system to them to enable calls to be promptly sent in is all that the situation calls for at present."

From the above comment it would appear that the Board are concerned only with the loss of property, and have apparently lost sight of the fact that protection and saving of life is an all-important part of fire-brigade work. If for financial reasons the Board find it impossible to improve the fire-prevention conditions in the districts named, then there is no more to be said; otherwise "Extensions of the street-alarm system is *'not'* all that the situation calls for at present," and in the interests of both life and property the acknowledged average gain of five minutes most surely justifies my recommendations.