

Hamilton—2nd February, 1921 : Inquiry, motor accident.

Christchurch—3rd May, 1921 : Inspection and report on protection of aviation hangars and aeroplanes.

Trentham—10th May, 1921 : Inspection of camp and equipment.

Waipukurau—24th May, 1921 : Inspection and report on the Pukeora Sanatorium.

Napier—21st June, 1921 : Testing of new motor turbine pumping-machine.

Levin—24th June, 1921 : Appointment of Superintendent.

Following upon an invitation from the executive officers of the United Fire Brigades' Association, I attended their annual conference and demonstration held in Napier in March last, and delivered an address to the delegates, entitled "Electricity: Some of its Risks in relation to Fire-brigade Work." At the request of the conference the address is being printed for circulation amongst the brigades.

Periodical inspections have been made of camps, drill-halls, ordnance stores, and other buildings under the jurisdiction of the Defence Department. As usual, advice has been given to local bodies and others in relation to fire-prevention, fire risks, water-supply, purchase of new plant; valuation of plant has been undertaken, and sketch-plans for new stations and additions have been prepared.

The time of the Deputy Inspector of Fire Brigades has been entirely taken up, in his capacity of Assistant Departmental Fire Inspector, in inspecting the various Government and semi-Government buildings throughout the Dominion; in that connection during the past twelve months he has inspected and reported upon 896 buildings, and there is no doubt that these inspections have been the means of preventing a number of outbreaks of fire.

For the purpose of assisting the United Fire Brigades' Association to hold its annual conference and biennial demonstration, the Government's annual contribution to the association was substantially increased, but conditionally upon improving the competition conditions and the submitting of the programme to this Department for approval. As a consequence several of the old-fashioned and obsolete items were cut out and more modern events substituted. Altogether the competition programme was greatly improved and will tend to considerably improve the efficiency of the brigades. Also, with the purpose of assisting the brigades to standardize their fire equipment, the Government has agreed to indent on their behalf such fire appliances and other equipment that is not manufactured in the Dominion, and in that direction a quantity of fire-hose has already been imported to the order of and distributed to a large number of the brigades.

Following are the principal improvements and additions to equipment :—

Christchurch—Extension of street alarm system to outer districts now in hand.

Gisborne—Section with house thereon adjoining central station purchased.

Levin—New central station in occupation; also a street fire-alarm system having six call-points installed.

Ohakune—New central station in occupation.

Wanganui—New central station approaching completion; also installation of street fire-alarm system nearly completed.

Woolston—Installation of street fire-alarm system having eleven call-points completed.

Motor appliances :—

Levin—20 horse-power motor-chassis purchased and fitted up as hose-and-ladder tender.

Masterton—25 horse-power motor-chassis purchased and fitted up as hose-and-ladder tender.

Napier—New 65 horse-power motor combination machine, fitted with 450–500 turbine pump, first-aid pumping-outfit, and 50 ft. extension ladder.

Ohakune—10 horse-power oil-fuel motor and steam fire-engine; also 20 horse-power motor hose-tender—both second-hand.

Port Chalmers—20 horse-power motor hose-and-ladder tender and fitted with a first-aid pumping-outfit.

Tauranga—20 horse-power motor hose-and-ladder tender and fitted with a C.O.2 first-aid outfit.

Timaru—New 45 horse-power motor combination machine, fitted with 300–400 turbine pump and first-aid pumping-outfit.

Wanganui—New 65 horse-power motor combination machine, fitted with 450–500 turbine pump, first-aid pumping-outfit, and 60 ft. extension ladder; also new 40 horse-power motor hose-and-ladder tender.

Casualties to civilians and firemen due to fires have been reported by Superintendents of Brigades as having occurred in their respective districts as follows :—

Auckland—6th April, 1921 : Private dwelling—male occupant severely burnt about arms and legs.

Christchurch—31st July, 1921 : Three persons badly burnt by explosion of toy cinematograph and removed to hospital, where one, a boy, succumbed to his injuries.

Dannevirke—26th April, 1921 : Private dwelling—elderly female occupant suffocated by heat and smoke.

Greymouth—13th February, 1921 : Private dwelling—elderly male occupant severely burnt and succumbed a few hours later.

Hamilton—19th January, 1921 : Motor fire-engine, carrying eleven officers and men, overturned whilst responding to an alarm, killing two firemen. Four more were more or less severely injured and the remainder shaken and knocked about.

Napier—30th April, 1921 : Superintendent sustained severe injury to knee.

Oamaru—20th September, 1920 : Fireman severely burnt about back and legs.

Wanganui—10th March, 1921 : Private one-story dwelling—three children suffocated by heat and smoke.