

It was necessary to call the attention of the Board to the fact that upon more than one recent occasion the chief and second officers of the brigade had been absent from the town at the same time—an undesirable proceeding.

MILTON.

Inspection, 24th January, 1922. Various drills with the manual pump and chemical-engine were carried out in a satisfactory manner, and the station and equipment were found to be in good order. In view of the near completion of the high-pressure water-supply reticulation, practical and verbal instruction was given in that method of fire-extinction.

NAPIER.

Inspection of both town and port sections of the brigade was made on the 27th April, 1922. The various drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner.

A 35 ft. extension should be carried on the motor pump machine, and the 50 ft. escape-ladder dismounted and stood in the station ready to run by hand. The siren alarm should be fixed in a more suitable position on the motor, and a permanent primer fixed in place of the present temporary one. Also, the bumper recently fixed on the front of the machine is altogether too large, and in the way: it should be removed altogether, or a smaller one fitted.

It would be a great mistake to further modify the plans for the proposed new central fire-station. If financial conditions will not permit erection of the station in accordance with the last design, the Board would be well advised to postpone building until the plan can be carried out. The installation of a street fire-alarm system also requires attention.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

Inspection, 19th October, 1921. Both the town and Fitzroy sections of the brigade attended at the central station for inspection. During the course of the inspection drills it was apparent that the men were in need of more instruction and drill, particularly in respect to working the 60 ft. escape-ladder.

It is quite opposed to all ideas of efficiency to have a different system of drill in two sections of the same brigade, and for that and other reasons I found it necessary to recommend the disbandment of the Fitzroy section as a separate unit of the brigade, and this has since been done.

Particularly seeing New Plymouth is a seaport town, the brigade should be provided with a couple of smoke-helmets, one of each pattern—viz., one self-contained oxygen-breathing apparatus, and the other an air-supplied smoke-helmet fitted with a telephone.

OAMARU.

Inspection, 28th March, 1922. The various inspection drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner as far as the men themselves were concerned, but otherwise fire-prevention conditions in Oamaru are far from satisfactory, which is in some measure reflected by the excessive fire loss during the last three years—probably the highest three-years continuous loss of any town of a similar size in the Dominion. As stated in my last two reports, the brigade is undermanned. The motor, a second-hand one in the first place, is more or less unsatisfactory. The water service generally is unsatisfactory; the street hydrants are very rusty, and boxes contain a lot of dirt—so much so as to render it difficult to ship the standpipes promptly; many of the hydrant-indicators are missing; the reticulation on the higher levels is inadequate, quite a lot of the piping being only 1½ in. and 2 in. in diameter. A street fire-alarm system is necessary.

OHAKUNE.

Inspection, 4th May, 1922. Throughout the day and during the night of my visit the brigade was engaged at a timber-mill fire situated some little distance outside the borough boundary, consequently there was no inspection muster. I visited the fire twice during the day and night; the motor steam fire-engine was working well, and the fire was handled in a manner that would have done credit to many an older and more experienced brigade.

The present arrangement for ringing the firebell is very crude, and requires bettering. The brigade should be provided with some helmets. Other small matters requiring attention are mentioned in my report to the Board.

PALMERSTON NORTH.

Inspection, 10th April, 1922. The inspection drills were laid out with the object of judging of the qualification of certain officers for promotion, and in that connection a special report has been submitted to the Board. The stations and equipment were in the usual good order and condition.

There are two matters which should receive attention from the Board: the purchase of a site for and erection of a new central fire-station, and the installation of a street fire-alarm system. The want of a suitable and recognized means of "calling" the brigade is a very weak point in the fire protection of the town, and may easily prove the cause of a serious disaster; therefore prompt action should be taken in the matter of installing a system of alarms.

PETONE.

Inspection, 19th June, 1922. The various inspection drills were carried out in the efficient manner usual with this brigade. The station and equipment were found in good order and condition. The members of the brigade deserve commendation for the interest displayed and the voluntary work performed in the additions to and otherwise improving the fire-station.

The Board have decided to purchase a second motor appliance.

I have to again recommend that the 4 in. pipe connecting the Gear Company's pumping outfit with the 6 in. main in Victoria Street be replaced with a 6 in. pipe. The fire-station should be connected with the public-telephone system, so making available some hundred potential fire-alarm call-points.