

During the inspection visits instruction in fire drill has been given in the smaller towns ; inspections have been made and reports submitted in respect to public buildings and institutions ; advice has been given to local bodies and others in regard to water-supplies and fire-prevention matters generally ; specifications for the supply of paint and appliances have been drawn up ; also a number of broadcast and other public addresses on the subject of fire waste and fire-prevention have been delivered.

Special visits and reports have been made, of which the following are the principal :—

Lower Hutt : July 15, 1927—Inspection and report.
 Waiuku : July 28, 1927—Conference with Town Board.
 Waikato Military Camp : July 29, 1927—Inspection and report.
 Wanganui : September 5, 1927—Annual meeting.
 Levin : October 12, 1927—Special Board meeting.
 Petone : October 19, 1927—Water-supply report and purchase of additional property.
 Auckland : December 5, 1927—Inspection of proposed building-sites, Avondale.
 Mount Roskill : December 10, 1927—Opening new station.
 Rotorua : December 15, 1927—Inspection and report, King George V Hospital.
 Timaru : January 10, 1928—Conference with Boards on building extensions.
 New Plymouth : February 26 to 29, 1928—United Fire Brigades Conference.

Following upon an invitation from the executive officers of the United Fire Brigades Association, I attended their annual conference held in New Plymouth in February last, and there delivered an address to the conference delegates upon fire-prevention and fire-protection matters generally. At the request of the conference the address is to be printed and distributed to the brigades.

Two new Volunteer Fire Police Corps have been formed, in Westport and Dargaville respectively. Chief officers report in highly appreciative terms of the valuable services at fires rendered by these purely voluntary organizations, the members of which are all prominent citizens of their respective towns.

As in previous years, the Department has, on behalf of various Fire Boards and of the United Fire Brigades Association, indented and distributed fire-hose in accordance with requests to that effect.

Following are the principal improvements and additions to equipment in various fire districts :—

Auckland : Purchase of new station-site at Avondale ; extensive additions to Remuera substation.
 Dunedin : 45 h.p. motor fitted with 300/350 g.p.m. pump, first-aid ladder, &c.
 Hamilton : Purchase new substation-site at Frankton.
 Hastings : Additions to central station.
 Hawera : Electric-siren installation.
 Oamaru : 45 h.p. motor fitted with 300/350 g.p.m. pump, first-aid ladders, &c.
 Ohakune : 20 h.p. motor, hose and ladder tender.
 Otaki : Electric-siren installation.
 Petone : Purchase section and residence adjoining central station.
 Pukekohe : Electric-siren installation.
 Taumarunui : 20 h.p. British motor hose-tender and 30 ft. Ajax ladder.
 Tauranga : 22.5 h.p. British motor hose-and-ladder tender ; installation street fire-alarm system.
 Timaru : Purchase of section and dwelling adjoining central station as residence for Superintendent.
 Waipukurau : 20 h.p. motor hose-and-ladder tender.
 Wanganui : Erection of brigade workshop at central station.
 Wellington : Two new substations, Miramar and Brooklyn, erected ; purchase of two 40/45 h.p. motor combination fitted with 300/350 g.p.m. turbine pump, first aid, &c., also two motor hose-and-ladder tenders.
 Whangarei : 40 h.p. motor, hose, ladder, and first-aid tender.

Superintendents have reported the following casualties as occurring in their respective districts :—

Auckland : July 24, 1927—Samuel Lodge, aged 72, burnt to death. September 25, 1927—Matthew Wishart rescued from boardinghouse but subsequently died in hospital.
 February 29, 1928—Isaac Bradovitch, boarder, jumped from veranda and sustained broken leg.
 Christchurch : Two men and a woman sustained severe bruises in dwellinghouse fire. All were removed to hospital, where the woman Mary Murphy later succumbed to her injuries.
 Wellington : November 22, 1927—George Jessen severely burned by explosive ; was removed to hospital, and later died from his injuries.

Quite a number of casualties of a less serious nature than the above are reported as having occurred to brigadesmen and civilians during the year.

The number of fire calls received throughout the forty-eight fire districts for the nine months ended 31st March, 1928, totalled 2,541, or only 199 less than the 2,740 calls received during the preceding twelve months ended 30th June, 1927—proportionately an increase of 20 per cent. The property fires for the same periods, respectively 1,044 as against 1,291, give a proportionate increase of 7 per cent. only. The remainder of the calls for the nine months are made up as follows : Chimney fires, 216 ; bush, grass, and rubbish fires, 776 ; false alarms, 414 ; out-of-district fires, 91.