

AUCKLAND.

Two inspections of the Auckland Fire Brigade, its stations and equipment, have been held—viz., 5th and 6th December, 1910, and 5th May, 1911.

In addition to the ordinary inspections, a test trial of the Dennis-Gwynne motor turbine, then lately acquired by the Fire Board, was held on the Queen's Wharf at 5 a.m. on the 5th December. The pump has a nominal capacity of 800 gallons per minute, but during the course of the trial there was an actual discharge through one 2 in. nozzle of 884 gallons per minute, and through two 1½ in. nozzles of 842 gallons per minute, a very satisfactory result. The pump is driven by a six-cylinder engine of 110-horse power.

The several "turnouts" of the brigade and its appliances at the different stations were accomplished in very quick time, and in an efficient manner. The plant and appliances are maintained in good order and condition, but the living-accommodation at the Central and Ponsonby Stations is very deficient, and these two stations are, in my opinion, particularly when the conditions governing the daily life of a permanent fireman are taken into consideration, overcrowded to an unhealthy degree, in addition to affecting the efficiency of the brigade as a whole. In this connection the following letter has been forwarded to the secretary of the Fire Board:—

"SIR,—

"Office of the Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 18th May, 1911.

"In connection with my recent visit of inspection to your city, I beg to inform you that, following upon the delivery in the near future of the combined electric hose-and-ladder car, it may be considered that, in the matter of the larger fire appliances, the Auckland Fire Brigade in its present area of action is well equipped for some time to come, but the matter of accommodation for the *personnel* has reached a very acute stage, so much so that it is materially affecting the efficiency of the brigade in general—as, for instance, it is a considerable factor in the present state of unrest. The very fact that firemen are of necessity so closely confined to the stations is a strong reason why they should be provided with comfortable quarters as one inducement to remain after undergoing a training and gaining practical experience that increases their value proportionately with a corresponding efficiency of the whole. The conditions now existing at the Central Station must be well known to your Board, and to increase the accommodation I would strongly recommend that your Board should at once acquire all the triangular piece of ground lying to the south of the station, and build thereon three sets of married quarters—viz., the first floor as quarters for the Superintendent, and the ground floor divided into two other sets. The quarters at present occupied by the Superintendent could then be utilized for single men: this would then relieve the existing congestion.

"At Ponsonby the section on the east side of the station should be acquired, and accommodation provided for six permanent, eight auxiliary firemen, and one set of married quarters for the officer in charge.

"The foregoing recommendations contain what I consider is the minimum that should be provided, and is only what is absolutely required in the present, and having in view the rapidly increasing value of land and property in Auckland (this in addition to brigade-efficiency) the sections mentioned should be acquired immediately. If advantage was taken of the amendment to the Fire Brigades Act empowering Fire Boards to borrow money up to the amount of £10,000, the cost of carrying out these proposals need not unduly increase the estimates for any one year.

"I have, &c.,

"THOS. T. HUGO,

"Inspector of Fire Brigades."

The Board has ordered from England an electric combined hose and turntable-ladder car. The ladder will have an elevation of 80 ft. Its delivery is expected shortly, and it should prove a most valuable addition to the equipment of the brigade.

During the year ending 30th June, 1911, 78 fires have occurred in the Auckland Fire District, as against 75 for the previous year, an increase of 3.

The fire loss for the year amounted to £6,982, compared with £36,586, a decrease of £29,604.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1911-12 is £8,174, as against £7,454 for the year 1910-11, an increase of £720.

CHRISTCHURCH.

Three inspections of the Christchurch Fire Brigade, its stations and equipment, have been held—viz., 26th July, 1910, 21st November, 1910, and 5th April, 1911.

During my first visit a very successful exhibition was given of the capabilities of the then recently acquired Dennis-Gwynne motor turbine pump. The suction was placed in the river just below the Chester Street Fire-station, and in 28 seconds after starting the engine a powerful stream of water through a 1½ in. nozzle at 100 lb. pressure was being discharged. The revolutions were then increased, and throughout the trial an average pressure of 135 lb. was maintained. The pump is described as capable of discharging 450 gallons of water per minute, but during portion of the time it was calculated there was a discharge of well over 500 gallons per minute. The pump is worked by an engine with six cylinders developing 70-horse power. Upon the occasion of my second visit, 21st November, 1910, a surprise false alarm was given at 10.39 p.m. from the street fire-alarm box at the corner of Hereford and Manchester Streets, distant about one-third of a mile from the Central Fire-station. The first motor with the Superintendent and four men arrived at 10.41.2 p.m. The motor turbine with the foreman and seven men arrived immediately after. Two jets of water were shown at 10.42.23 p.m., or 3 minutes