

"I would again direct the attention of your Board to the necessity for the erection of a new fire-station. The rough plans shown to me, if altered as I suggested, would be very suitable, containing quarters for a married couple and accommodation for not less than four single men. The present station and firebell, in addition to being inadequate, are not in a good position in regard to the risks and trend of the town.

"I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

"Inspector of Fire Brigades."

Since the date of the foregoing report plans have been drawn for a new Central Station, and the sketched design has been submitted to the Minister of Internal Affairs, and approved of by him. The present strength of the brigade is 22 all told.

During the past year 7 fires have occurred in the Dannevirke Fire District, 1 less than in the previous year.

The fire loss amounted to £955 as against £1,184, a decrease of £229.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1911-12 is £592 9s. 4d., compared with £595 11s. 6d. for 1910-11, a decrease of £3 2s. 2d.

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Two inspections of the Dunedin Fire Brigade and its equipment have been held—viz., 29th September, 1910, and 13th February, 1911.

At the inspection held on the 29th September there were present the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and 22 officers and firemen. These, with 3 who were on duty, account for the full strength of the brigade—viz., 27 all told. During the course of the second inspection certain experiments were carried out in Crawford Street for the purpose of testing the water-pressure.

The various "turnouts" were accomplished smartly, and the required drills carried out efficiently.

The plant and appliances are maintained in good order and condition.

As recommended in my report dated 31st March, 1910, arrangements have been made whereby a certain number of the South Dunedin section of the brigade are now available when called upon to assist at fires in the city proper, but during the course of my inspection in February last I was informed by the Superintendent that at the time he had only eleven men available to man the appliances in answer to a first call in the city. This number of men is not sufficient, and as the new Central Station will be ready for occupation shortly, better arrangements should be made immediately it is possible to have a larger proportion of the total strength of the brigade available for the "turnout," particularly to calls in the more congested parts of the city.

The following interim report was forwarded to the secretary of the Fire Board :—

"SIR,—

"Office of the Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 22nd February, 1911.

"With reference to matters discussed at the informal meeting with the members of your Board on the 14th instant, herewith I beg to confirm my recommendations, in respect to that part dealing with future policy, to be carried out as opportunity will allow in the following order :—

"(1.) Provision of a second motor of a similar horse-power, but lighter in equipment than the present one.

"(2.) Provision of more street fire-alarm call-points.

"(3.) Provision and equipment of sub-stations.

"(4.) Provision of a 70-75 ft. ladder electrically propelled and manipulated.

"As my reasons for the foregoing recommendations, with methods of carrying them out, &c., together with other matters in connection with the more efficient working of your brigade, were fully discussed at the meeting, there is no necessity to write at length here.

"No main has yet been laid down in the southern portion of Cumberland Street. In view of the large risks there, this is an important matter, and the City Council should be urged to place this work in hand at once.

"Although outside the jurisdiction of the Fire Board, seeing how materially a disastrous fire on the Harbour Board's property will affect the city, I would respectfully suggest to your Board that some mutual arrangement should be made with the Harbour Board for the better protection of their property in case of fire.

"I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

"Inspector of Fire Brigades."

There has been a heavy fire loss in the Dunedin Fire District during the past year, this mainly due to the fire that took place in the Otago Agricultural and Pastoral Society's buildings in Crawford Street on the night of the 22nd December, 1910, and which was responsible for a loss approximating £20,000. A Coroner's inquest was held into the circumstances, and during the course of the inquiry it was elicited that owing to some stupid actions there was a delay in sending the alarm to the brigade, and also for some little time after their arrival the pressure of water was very unsatisfactory. In connection with this last matter a reliable pressure-gauge should be fixed in the watch-room at the Central Fire-station, and the fireman on duty for the time being should enter in the occurrence-book at stated periods the pressure then showing on the gauge, and also the pressure showing immediately after the brigade have left the station in response to an alarm of fire. Any unusual fluctuation in the pressure should be at once reported by the fireman on duty to the officer in charge of the station, so that steps may be taken immediately to ascertain the cause and make preparations to meet the emergency if required.