

with only about 25 ft. of frontage. One instance of this in particular occurs in a narrow street, and illustrates very clearly that if persisted in it will be the cause of creating very dangerous fire-areas in your borough.

" I have, &c.,

" THOS. T. HUGO,

" Inspector of Fire Brigades."

" SIR,—

" Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 31st March, 1911.

" Following upon my visit of inspection to Gisborne, and my interview with the members of your Board on the 25th instant, I would herewith emphasize the necessity to at once provide your brigade with coupling-ladders, hand-pumps, and ambulance-box, also to make reliable arrangements for the conveyance, in addition to the hose-reel, of those indispensable appliances. I would point out that the absence of ladders immediately upon arrival at a fire might be the cause of fatal consequences.

" In regard to the station-site, erection of station, fire-alarm installation, question of motor, &c., as it appeared during the course of the above-mentioned interview that your Board realizes the necessity and has decided to take into serious consideration the placing of the brigade upon an efficient footing to deal with fires in your rapidly growing town, beyond again emphasizing the absolute necessity, in the interest of both life and property, of these improvements, I will postpone any further remarks dealing with those subjects until after my next visit of inspection. In reference to the branches and nozzles, I called upon the firm who supplied them, and find that the word 'special' refers to the length—viz., 24 in. As the prices previously quoted to me cover only branches of ordinary length, the prices charged must stand; at the same time I informed them of my recommendation that your Board should return the couplings supplied.

" I have, &c.,

" THOS. T. HUGO,

" Inspector of Fire Brigades."

Up to the present very little has been done by the Gisborne Fire Board in the way of improving the equipment of their brigade, which is very much behind in that respect, and this in view of the fact that the average fire loss is considerably in excess of almost any other town, compared on a population basis: but at the interview with the members of the Board at the time of my last visit I was given to understand that they fully intend to remedy the existing state of things during the coming year.

During the past year 20 fires have occurred in the Gisborne Fire District, as against 32 for the previous year, a decrease of 12 in number.

The fire loss amounted to £7,392, compared with £8,488, a decrease of £1,096.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1911–12 is £1,159 4s. 6d., as against £541 8s. 2d. for 1910–11, an increase of £617 16s. 4d.

#### GREYMOUTH.

Two inspection visits have been paid to the Greymouth Fire District during the year.

At the first visit, Thursday, 17th November, 1910, a surprise false alarm of fire was given at 8.40 p.m. by means of ringing the firebell at the Central Station. By 8.44–15 p.m. two deliveries had been got to work in Hospital Street, and there were present the Superintendent and 5 firemen, with other members of the brigade in attendance at the hose-reel station in Tainui Street. These results are better than appear at first sight, and may be considered satisfactory. The bell at the Central Station is a comparatively small one, and the ringing arrangements very bad; and, wishing to observe the outcome of ringing this particular bell only, I did not cause the larger bell in Tainui Street to be rung, which is the course adopted by the brigade in response to an ordinary alarm of fire.

During my second visit, 2nd March, 1911, an inspection was made of the stations and equipment only.

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

The lower part of the new bell-tower erected on the corner of Buccleuch and High Streets has been boarded in as suggested, and will serve for the present as a hose-reel station for the district. A new hose-reel has been purchased.

The manila cords at present being used for ringing the firebell at the Boundary Street Station should be replaced by flexible steel-wire rope of small diameter. Whilst in Greymouth a sketch-plan for a new Central Fire-station was submitted for my opinion, but I consider the internal design or arrangements unsuitable, and partly in this connection the following letter was sent to the secretary of the Board:—

" SIR,—

" Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 28th November, 1910.

" In reference to the proposed new station, I would strongly recommend to your Board that, in addition to sleeping-accommodation for single men, a set of quarters should be provided for a married man to act as station-keeper. There are a number of reasons for this: First, it is to be presumed that in the near future a system of street fire-alarms will be installed in Greymouth, and there should always be some person, male or female, on the premises to ring the big bell when the street alarm is operated, otherwise, unless the alarm system is directly connected up for twelve to fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, the alarm system is useless; second, the moral supervision required where a number of young single men are quartered: third, the watch maintained, by the very fact of a family residing on the premises, over appliances and instruments that are becoming more valuable as time goes on.

" As it is unsafe to take the fire-engine over the bridge into Blaketown, and there does not appear to be any prospect of the water-system being extended there in the near future, I have to recommend, so as to afford some measure of protection, that a chemical engine be purchased and placed in that district, and a section of the brigade established there.

" I have, &c.,

" THOS. T. HUGO,

" Inspector of Fire Brigades."