

the outer walls in numerous places: this applies also to the internal partitions. The men's bedrooms have been supplied with practically no furniture except the beds and bedding; the bathroom fittings are poor; the oil-stove supplied is inadequate, and with no proper place to put it. A room fitted with a range or stove should have been provided. The station should have been arranged and furnished with some small degree of comfort for the purpose of encouraging the men to frequent and remain on the premises as much as possible, but that object appears not to have been considered. A further sum of, say, £50, would have made a great difference in the matter. Altogether, in my opinion, your Board has unfortunately pursued a mistaken policy of what must prove to be false economy, and one that is not in accord with the best interests of your rapidly growing town.

In view of the design of the brick building now being erected on the corner of Cameron and Bank Streets, wherein the first floor is entirely supported on three sides by bare or unprotected iron columns only, I would suggest to your Board the advisability of recommending the Borough Council to amend their by-laws in the direction of making it compulsory in the future to have all such columns fireproofed in the interests of both life and property.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

SIR,—

6th June, 1913.

An inspection of the Whangarei Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 22nd and 23rd ultimo, and following is a report in that connection forwarded for the consideration of your Board:—

At the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and nine firemen: these, with seven on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade. Satisfactory reasons were given for the absence on leave of the number stated.

Three lengths of the new hose were taken to Walton Street for testing purposes, and with a pressure of about 125 lb. two of the lengths, when capped, proved to have a considerable number of small pinholes, but the third length, in addition to the pinholes, developed two bad leaks about the centre of the length. In any case there is no reserve supply of hose, and a further quantity should be provided.

One side of the frame of the telescopic ladder was fractured at a recent fire. It should be repaired by means of clamps, but care must be exercised when using it in future: as stated previously, it is not a suitable type of ladder for fire-brigade work.

During the course of my inspection I noticed in various parts of the town a number of the street hydrants were covered over with street-metal, mud, &c; particularly was this so in Walton Street, where it took the firemen nearly ten minutes to find and open the hydrant. The Borough Council should be requested to keep the hydrants clear at all times.

I noticed in the fire reports that there was a very poor attendance of firemen at some of the calls, and upon inquiry found that with the wind in certain directions a number of the men living out in the Mairtown direction cannot hear the main fire-bell; and I recommend a telephone be placed in the house of the man residing nearest to the Mairtown bell, and he be required to ring it upon receiving a call through the telephone. A water-pressure gauge should be installed in the central fire-station.

I would again call the attention of your Board to the necessity of providing some better means of transporting the plant to fires. With widely detached buildings, spread over an area of 2,000 acres or more, by the time the firemen pulling the hose-reel arrive at the scene of the fire, in the large majority of cases, they are not in a fit condition to carry out the necessary work in the manner it should be done.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

The central fire-station was removed and re-erected on the new site, but, as will be seen by reference to my report above dated 6th January, in a very unsatisfactory manner. Some small improvements have since been made, but this Board will be acting wisely if they make provision for the erection of a better and more suitable building in the near future.

During the past year four fires have occurred in the district, three less than during the previous year.

The average attendance of brigadesmen at four calls was 11.75 per call, or 58.75 per cent. of the total strength.

The fire loss amounted to £3,244, as compared with £4,255, a decrease of £1,011.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1913-14 is £480, as compared with £550 for 1912-13, a decrease of £70.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (1,500 copies), £20.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1913.

Price, 9d.]