

There is a well-established remedy in the automatic or "auto-detector" system of fire-alarms in direct communication with the fire-stations, of which there are some sixty installations now in New Zealand; but a great many more are required. Unfortunately, fire brigade authorities have no jurisdiction in this matter; and, for the following reasons—first, protection of life; second, elimination of the "late call" condition which very often causes extensive loss to property other than that in which the fire originates; third, as an appreciable step towards a reduction of the excessive fire waste in the Dominion—I would respectfully suggest that the Government might well, in the common interest, consider the advisability of introducing legislation making it compulsory to install "auto-detectors" in certain classes of buildings. For some time past there has been a movement in Great Britain with the object of inducing the Government to make compulsory the installation of automatic alarms, and in Sydney "new building regulations render compulsory the installation of automatic fire-detectors." The reliability of auto-detector installations generally is beyond doubt. "Experience has proved that, including the risk of late calls in the early days of the auto-detector industry, 97 per cent. of auto-detector calls to actual outbreaks have resulted in fires being extinguished before more than merely nominal damage was done. The other 3 per cent. is accounted for by the fact that although auto-detectors gave the calls in good time there were hitches in answering to the warnings, hitches which were not in any way due to the detectors." "After some ten years' working the automatic fire-alarm companies are able to show that the losses sustained by the insurance companies on detector-protected risks are less than 5 per cent. of the premiums paid, as against the average loss ratio of 53 per cent. in respect of unprotected property."

Appended are the following tables:—

1. Summary of calls attended by each brigade.
2. Fire loss in each district.
3. Annual cost of each brigade.
4. Summary of the causes of fires in each district.
5. Personnel and equipment of each brigade.

Also detailed report dealing with each fire district.

I have, &c.,
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1. SUMMARY OF FIRE CALLS.

District.	Fires.	Chimney Fires.	Bush, Grass, and Rubbish Fires.	False Alarms.	Out of District.	Totals.
Auckland	95	17	14	57	11	194
Christchurch	95	7	12	52	9	175
Dannevirke	6	1	..	..	2	9
Dunedin	88	20	6	34	1	149
Feilding	9	3	1	..	1	14
Gisborne	22	3	3	7	10	45
Greymouth	6	1	1	1	..	9
Hamilton	5	1	3	..	..	9
Hastings	14	2	..	..	1	17
Hawera	3	1	..	..	..	4
Hokitika	9	..	..	..	..	9
Lawrence	2	..	..	..	..	2
Maori Hill .. ..	..	..	..	1	1	2
Masterton	6	7	2	..	3	18
Milton	3	..	..	..	..	3
New Plymouth	7	2	..	..	..	9
Oamaru	12	1	..	..	1	14
Palmerston North	29	1	1	4	3	38
Petone	18	..	..	3	1	22
Rotorua	4	2	2	..	..	8
Timaru	16	1	2	1	..	20
Whangarei	6	..	1	..	..	7
Totals	455	70	48	160	44	777