

SIR,—

19th March, 1914.

Following upon my inspection of the Christchurch Fire Brigade, its stations and equipment, held on the 12th and 13th instant, herewith I have the honour to submit a report for the consideration of your Board.

At the inspection muster held at the central station at 7.30 p.m. on the 12th there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and twenty-three firemen, or twenty-five all told. Instructions were given to turn out as for a city call with the supposition that the old central fire-station in Lichfield Street was well alight. The appliances turned out included the turbine motor, hose and chemical motor, and the small first-aid motor towing the ladder and water-tower. All the apparatus was got to work in a smart and satisfactory manner, but some of the nozzles used were of a defective nature.

Next morning the motor turbine pump was got to work from the river for experimental purposes, and with very satisfactory results. The substations at Sydenham and St. Albans were inspected on the 13th, and the stations and appliances found to be in good order and condition.

During the course of the inspection drill the loss of time and labour involved in working the present fire-ladder as in comparison with those of more recent type was very marked indeed, and your Board should take into consideration the matter of purchasing a ladder of modern design.

I note that the work of placing the street fire-hydrant indicators has not yet been completed. I notice also that the recently renewed block tires on the turbine motor are wearing very badly.

I observe that the concrete reservoir in Cathedral Square has finally been filled in, and understand the question of doing away with others has been mooted, and I would recommend your Board should enter a strong protest with the City Council against any such action; in fact, more reservoirs should be provided, instead of doing away with the very few existing ones.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

The boundaries of the Christchurch Fire District have been further extended by the inclusion of North Richmond, having an area of 220 acres.

The new central fire-station was officially opened on the 25th September, the staff and plant having been previously removed from both the Lichfield and Chester Street stations to the new premises. The new buildings contain ten sets of married quarters, each self-contained and fitted with every convenience. Accommodation is provided for twenty-seven single men. The engine-house measures 56 ft. by 48 ft., social hall 35 ft. by 48 ft., gymnasium 21 ft. by 35 ft. These last two are divided by folding doors only, and when occasion requires can be thrown into one. A Board room and secretary's office are also included, and generally the new station provides for all that goes to the making on modern lines of a well-designed fire-station.

A new and very complete combined fire-alarm cabinet and telephone switchboard has been installed, fitted with twenty-four circuit indicators making provision for some two hundred call-points. The electric current for the street fire-alarm system and for other purposes is obtained by means of an engine and dynamo installed on the premises.

Three more private automatic fire-alarms have been installed, making twenty-one in all.

The Board has decided to purchase another motor hose, ladder, and turbine pump machine.

An object-lesson very much to the point as to the inadvisability of doing away with the underground tanks (see report dated the 19th March) was afforded in Christchurch in March last, when, owing to a break in the 15 in. main, the supply from the gravitation reservoir had to be cut off, and for some time the city was dependent for its protection upon what water could be made available by means of pumping from the river and from the underground tanks in question. This accident was a forcible illustration of the necessity of laying down a duplicate carrying-main from the reservoir and connecting with the city reticulation system. Also, there are portions of districts within the city boundaries not yet reticulated, and wherein no water is available for fire-protection purposes, and this matter should receive prompt attention.

During the year 175 calls were received, of which ninety-five proved to be actual fires occurring within the district, or nine more than during the preceding year.

The fire loss amounted to £17,709, as against £12,370 for 1913, an increase of £5,339.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1914-15 is £8,000, as compared with £9,000 for 1913-14, a decrease of £1,000.

DANNEVIRKE.

Two inspections of the Dannevirke Brigade, its stations and equipment, have been made—viz., 16th October, 1913, and 6th April, 1914.

At the first inspection there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and fifteen firemen: these, with two on duty and two on leave, accounted for twenty-one out of a full strength of twenty-two then on the roll.

Various wet and dry drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner.

As pointed out at the time, a number of the couplings required putting in a lathe and the threads turning down to the regulation size.

The second inspection is covered by the following report forwarded to the secretary of the Board:—

SIR,—

15th April, 1914.

Following upon my inspection of the Dannevirke Fire Brigade and its equipment held on the 6th instant, herewith I beg to submit the following report for the consideration of your Board:—

At the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and twelve firemen: these, with three on leave, accounted for seventeen out of a total of eighteen then on the roll. The membership of the brigade is at present four short of the authorized strength of twenty-two.

Immediately prior to the muster the brigade was called out. The alarm was caused by some fat that was being rendered down in a gas-stove catching alight in a dwelling some little distance from