

As in my annual report for last year, I have again to call attention to the necessity for the better protection of the South Dunedin and Caversham portions of the city, and now that the Board have been empowered by an amendment to the Fire Brigades Act to raise a further loan this matter should receive attention at the earliest possible moment.

I understand that negotiations are now in progress with the object of providing adequate protection for the Harbour Board's property and waterfront. The installation of the new system of street fire-alarms has been completed throughout the city proper, and is working very satisfactorily.

The electric motor escape-ladder that has been on order for over twelve months has not yet been supplied by the manufacturer.

During the year 149 calls were received, of which eighty-eight proved to be actual fires occurring within the district, or twelve more than during the previous twelve months.

The fire loss amounted to £13,435, as against £18,572 for 1913, a decrease of £5,137.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1914-15 is £7,000, the same amount as for 1913-14.

#### FEILDING.

Two inspections of the Feilding Fire Brigade and its equipment have been made; the first, on the 17th November, is covered by the following report forwarded to the secretary of the Board:—

SIR,—

25th November, 1913.

An inspection of the Feilding Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 17th instant, when there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and nineteen firemen: these, with one on duty and two on leave, accounted for the full strength of the brigade—a satisfactory attendance.

Various drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner.

An analysis of the attendance of members of the brigade at fires throughout the year ended the 30th June last show that the average is not by any means a satisfactory one. After making a number of inquiries, I consider the result due in a great measure to the unsatisfactory nature of the alarm given. This fault will no doubt be remedied to some extent by the provision of a mechanical system of ringing the central station fire-bell. I understand the Board are in course of installing some such system, but I would again strongly recommend (see report dated the 27th December, 1912) that the bell in Manchester Street—practically useless where it is at present—should at once be removed and re-erected at the corner of Camden and Manchester Streets, or somewhere in that vicinity.

None of the ladders with which the brigade is at present equipped will reach the roofs of a number of the buildings in Feilding, and I would recommend that another 10 ft. 6 in. coupling ladder, of the same pattern as the three already in the possession of the brigade, should be obtained.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

The second inspection was held on the 26th May, and at the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and eighteen firemen: these, with one on duty and two on leave, accounted for twenty-three out of a total strength of twenty-four—a satisfactory attendance. Various reel, hose, and ladder drills were carried out in a fairly satisfactory manner. I noticed that some of the street hydrants were completely covered over with vegetation. More attention should be paid to keeping the hydrants clear. 500 ft. of new hose should be provided.

A turbine, working from the town pressure, has been installed for ringing the fire-bell at the central station, and is, I understand, working satisfactorily.

The brigade received fourteen calls, nine of which proved to be actual fires occurring within the district, or four less than during the previous twelve months. The attendance of members of the brigade at thirteen calls, No. 7 omitted, averaged 14·15 per call, or 63·1 per cent. of the total strength.

The fire loss for the year amounted to £756, as against £5,741 for the preceding year, a decrease of £4,985.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1914-15 is £683 11s., as compared with £612 10s. for 1913-14, an increase of £71 1s. 7

#### GISBORNE.

Two inspections of the Gisborne Fire Brigade and its equipment have been made—viz., the 7th and 8th January, and the 1st July.

The following reports, forwarded to the secretary of the Board, cover both inspections—

SIR,—

14th January, 1914.

An inspection of the Gisborne Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 7th and 8th instant. At the muster held on the evening of the 8th there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and nineteen firemen, these accounting for twenty-one out of a full strength of twenty-two then on the roll.

I am pleased to report that the motor appliance is now being maintained in first-class order, and the inspection turnout and subsequent run was highly satisfactory, with the exception that where the car stands in the engine-house the floor has a slope downward and backward from the door; also the weight of the car causes the back wheels to sink into the asphalt, thus throwing a very heavy initial pull on the engine. This should be remedied in the manner explained.