

When getting a delivery to work opposite the English Church in Palmerston Road it took the members of the brigade some nine minutes to locate the street hydrant; there was a thick layer of dust covering the street, and it was ultimately discovered that some person had shifted the hydrant-indicator to a point 10 ft. out of line. This is a dangerous proceeding, and your Board should take some action in the matter.

Practice with the chemical engine was carried out satisfactorily, and instruction was given in the use of the new telescopic ladder, and in this last connection I note that at present the ladder cannot be carried on the motor owing to the engine-house door being too low.

The new couplings are not in accordance with the Government patterns, but this, I believe, was due to a misunderstanding. I tested three 100 ft. lengths out of the 1,000 ft. of new hose, and, although the water-pressure available for the test, after shutting off the Whataupoko supply, only amounted to 102 lb., the result was very unsatisfactory, and it is to be regretted that your Board did not follow my recommendation in the matter (see report dated the 1st May).

I would recommend your Board should make arrangements with private persons for the use of their telephones for fire-alarm purposes on the lines as fully explained to the Chairman of the Board, Superintendent, &c., whilst I was in Gisborne. By adopting this suggestion a fairly good substitute will be provided at a very small cost until such time as an up-to-date fire-alarm system can be installed.

Readings of the gauge at the fire-brigade station show a very low average pressure throughout the daytime. I note the Borough Council have since prohibited the watering of gardens with hose, &c., but careful arrangements are necessary for the prompt concentration of pressure in case of fire.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

SIR,—

1st July, 1914.

An inspection of the Gisborne Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 1st instant, and following is my report in that connection.

At the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, sixteen firemen, and one cadet: these, with three on leave, accounting for twenty-two out of a total strength of twenty-three on the roll.

A series of wet and dry motor, ladder, and hose drills were carried out in a satisfactory manner, but it was apparent that the motor-driver requires more practice in the handling of the motor-machine.

The motor-car and other plant is being maintained in good order and condition.

The brigade should be provided with another hand-pump fitted with leather hose.

I note there is a substantial increase in the water-pressure, the gauge registering 130 lb. at 8 p.m. on the 1st, and the same again at 11 a.m. on the 2nd.

I would again direct the attention of your Board to the urgent necessity of erecting a new fire-station. As pointed out on several previous occasions, the brigade cannot be expected to obtain efficient results under the present unsatisfactory conditions.

I have, &c.,

THOS. T. HUGO,

Inspector of Fire Brigades.

The fire loss in Gisborne for the past year is high, and in comparison with the other fire districts comes fifth in order in respect to the number of fires, and third in order in the fire loss. In my opinion, the higher ratio of loss is not due to any laxity or inefficiency on the part of the personnel of the brigade, but to the want of better equipment, and particularly due to the long-delayed erection of a new central fire-station providing accommodation for men to sleep on the premises, and also to the want of means for calling the brigade in case of fire. In respect to this last steps are now being taken, by means of utilizing the telephone system, that will to some extent overcome the difficulty until such time as the Board can see their way to install a proper street fire-alarm system.

During the year the brigade received forty-five calls, of which twenty-two proved to be actual fires within their district, six less than during the previous twelve months. The attendance of members of the brigade at forty-two general alarms average 17.74 per alarm, or 79.7 per cent. of the full strength.

The fire loss amounted to £9,917, as against £5,940 for 1913, an increase of £3,977.

The estimated cost of the brigade for 1914-15 is £763, as compared with £789 10s. 3d. for 1913-14, a decrease of £26 10s. 3d.

GREYMOUTH.

Two inspections of the Greymouth Fire Brigade, its stations and equipment, have been made—viz., the 4th December, 1913, and the 21st April, 1914.

At the first inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and sixteen firemen: these, with two on leave, account for the full strength of the brigade.

Various drills were carried out, and the steam fire-engine was taken to the Cowper Street Bridge; the suction-hose having been put in good order, it worked satisfactorily.

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

SIR,—

1st May, 1914.

An inspection of the Greymouth Fire Brigade and its equipment was made on the 21st ultimo, and following is my report in that connection:—

At the inspection muster there were present the Superintendent, Deputy, and fourteen firemen these, with three on leave, accounting for nineteen out of a total strength of twenty then on the roll.

Various drills were carried out in a fairly satisfactory manner.