

A number of special visits have been paid, of which the following are the principal :—

- Rotorua—November 24, 1924 : King George V Hospital, inspection and report.
- Burnham—December 15, 1924 : Inspection and report upon fire protection for the camp.
- Masterton—August 5, 1924 : Testing of motor pumping outfit for Masterton and Ohakune.
- Christchurch—September 4, 1924 : Testing of motor-pump on behalf of Kaiapoi Fire Board.
- Hamilton—November 26, 1924 : In the matter of additional land for extension of central station.
- Lecston—December 16, 1924 : Inspection and report upon the fire protection of the town.
- Trentham Camp—December 23, 1924 : Inspection and report.
- Masterton—March 17, 1925 : Trial of motor-pump.
- Dunedin—April 1, 1925 : Trial of motor-pump.
- Onehunga—May 20, 1925 : Inspection of borough.
- Otaki—May 29, 1925 : Meeting of Fire Board.
- Fort Dorset—June 22, 1925 : Inspection and report.

Following upon an invitation from the executive officers of the United Fire Brigades Association, I attended their annual conference and subsequent demonstration held in Christchurch in March last, and delivered an address to the conference delegates entitled "Fire-prevention and Relative Matters." At the request of the conference the address is to be printed and distributed to the brigades.

During the conference several interesting addresses were delivered, exhibits shown, and demonstrations given; also, there is a continuing improvement in the competition programmes, new events have been introduced and the older ones brought into greater conformity with more modern and practical ideas of fire-fighting. Altogether both conferences and demonstrations are each succeeding year becoming of greater educational value to the fire service generally.

Inspections have been made and reports prepared in respect to public buildings and institutions; also, as usual, advice has been given to local bodies and others in regard to fire-prevention, water-supply, &c., and specifications for the supply of plant and appliances have been drawn up.

During the year the Department has, on behalf of various Fire Boards and of the United Fire Brigades Association, imported and distributed, in accordance with the requisitions received, 11,500 ft. of fire-hose, and various other fire-brigade equipment that is not manufactured in the Dominion.

Following are the principal improvements and additions to equipment :—

- Auckland : Purchase of land adjoining headquarters station for extension of building; installation of two additional street fire-alarm circuits.
- Christchurch : New 85 ft. petrol-electric turntable fire-ladder; tenders called for erection of new district station at Sydenham.
- Dannevirke : Tender accepted for installation of street fire-alarm system.
- Dunedin : New 90 h.p. 1,000 g.p.m. pump, hose, ladder, and first-aid pump combination motor machine.
- Gisborne : Two trailer 200 g.p.m. motor-pump outfit; tender accepted for installation of street fire-alarm system.
- Greymouth : New engine-shed erected in Blaketown.
- Hawera : Tenders called for supply of 35 h.p. motor pumping combination machine, and for installation of street fire-alarm system.
- Invercargill : New 65 h.p. 700 g.p.m. pump motor combination machine.
- Kaiapoi : New 22 h.p. 150/200 g.p.m. pump, motor hose-and-ladder tender.
- Masterton : New 45 h.p. 300/350 g.p.m. pump motor combination machine.
- Milton : 20 h.p. motor hose-and-ladder tender.
- Ohakune : Trailer 250 g.p.m. motor-pump outfit.
- Palmerston North : A nine-call-point fire-alarm circuit installed.
- Wanganui : New 35 h.p. 255/300 g.p.m. pump, ladder, and first-aid pump combination motor machine.

A most regrettable incident of the year's working was the motor accident which occurred in Christchurch on the 15th June, resulting in the instant death of the officer in charge of the motor fire-engine, and more or less seriously injuring the other six firemen forming the motor squad.

The returns show a decrease in the number of calls, but a large increase in the number of actual fires. The number of calls received throughout the fire districts for 1924-25 totalled 1,628, as against 1,702 for 1923-24, a decrease of 74. The 1,628 calls are made up under the different headings as follows: Fires, 828 (741); increase, 87. Chimney fires, 238 (223); increase, 15. Bush and rubbish fires, 254 (358); decrease 104. False alarms, 257 (319); decrease, 62. Out-of-district fires, 51 (61); decrease, 10.

Of the 828 fires, 17 are reported as due to incendiarism, 14 as having occurred on unoccupied premises, and 224 as of unknown origin. The principal causes as shown by the returns are—sparks from copper-fires and fireplaces, 77; electricity, 69; lighted matches, 45; motors backfiring, &c., 42; smoking and cigarette-butts, 41.

The total fire loss throughout the fire districts for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1925, amounted to £306,614, as against £358,024 for the previous twelve months, this showing a decreased loss of £51,410 in face of an increase of 87 in the number of actual fires. The three heaviest district losses occurred in Auckland (£85,342), Christchurch (£78,331), and Invercargill (£19,783), a total of £183,456, and accounting for 60 per cent. of the total loss. As compared with the first six months of the Fire Board year (ended 31st December, 1924) the returns from the fire districts show a very large decrease—£99,070 as against £207,044—in the fire loss for the last six months (ended 30th June, 1925).