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THE JET



OFFICIAL JOURNAL
of THE NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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THE JET

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF

The National Fire Service
Officers' Association

VOL. II No. 5

APRIL 1945

Temporary War-time Officers

M.A.L. CRITICIZES THE N.F.S.O.A.

SINCE the beginning of 1942 our Association has surged forward on the wave of enthusiasm which originally created it from the select pre-N.F.S. body of Chief Officers.

District Officers, Chief and Deputy Chief Officers, the professional nucleus of the Association, became on Nationalization Fire Force Commanders, Divisional and Column Officers, and the Senior Officers Association in the natural course of events was first limited to these ranks. Very soon it became apparent, however, that the vastly greater body of officers excluded from membership had no facilities for representation or collective bargaining unless they joined the Officers' section of the Fire Brigades Union, a healthy and vigorous organization which has never failed to make its needs heard and considered.

A TIMELY DECISION

The continued exclusion of junior officers would thus have resulted in an unthinkable split in the officer ranks which, had it been allowed to develop, would have created antagonism and been detrimental to general efficiency.

A timely decision to change the name and throw membership open to all officer ranks averted these ills. From this point the wave of enthusiasm grew, and, riding it, the Association achieved its first and basic purpose—that of official recognition by the Department.

Now, what has happened to our wave? We all know that its forward force is spent and is in danger of going into reverse.

It is essential at this stage that we recognize two things.

Firstly, the influx of Senior Company and Company Officers and the later admission of Women Officers represented for the most part the body of temporary war-time appointments, and I think I am correct in averring that this body tipped the balance in favour of Departmental recognition.

Temporary War-time Officers

Secondly, since they were first on the scene, the Professional nucleus has retained control and, for the most part, cornered representation.

WHAT HAS BEEN GAINED?

In logical sequence, let us now examine the results of our representatives' efforts on behalf of temporary war-time officers, and also the instances where such efforts, so urgently needed, were never expended.

It is not desired in this article to belittle the efforts made, since they were indubitably made in good faith and in the knowledge that in most cases all officers, including the professional minority, would benefit. It is, however, desired to demonstrate that such major reforms or concessions as have been granted as a result of Association representations did, in fact, arrive in the natural course of events, without the need for undue pressure from the Association.

It is felt, for instance, that the first £25 increment for Company Officers was granted not so much as a result of the Association's request for a £50 increment, but by the need to redress the balance of remuneration between Section Leaders and Company Officers.

Referring to the increment of £50 finally standardized for all officers below Fire Force Commander rank in July, 1944, it is surely perfectly reasonable to assume that the Secretary of State would eventually be *compelled* at some stage to admit either his Department's original error in fixing salaries too high, or that those same salaries were now inadequate. This latter since official realization of the progressive rise in costs of living has been signalized by the recognition for pay and pension purposes of cost of living bonus awards now totalling 24/- per week.



Junior officers, despite our representations, were compelled for three years to wear central supply uniforms of strictly utility style, many of them fantastically ill-fitting on issue, and made of a stout serge which rapidly assumed a mirror-like sheen. When at last the concession of private purchase was granted, can our representatives feel that it was due to their own urgent and fluent efforts, or to the fact that central supply contracts had nearly run their allotted course, and to have renewed some of them (and one in particular, which I could name) would have been more than scandalous?

VITALLY NECESSARY REFORMS

To recount the tardy or questionable successes achieved makes a sorry enough tale, but what of the vitally necessary reforms which have never even been tabled? Has the Discipline Code, which permits a Fire Force Commander in effect to initiate a prosecution and then to sit as sole

Temporary War-time Officers

judge and arbiter of punishment over one of his own officers, ever been subjected to critical examination?

Reverting to our wave of enthusiasm, surely now we begin to recognize not only the symptom—apathy—but the real undertow which is responsible for its decline. Senior Officers have continued to hold and junior officers to concede, by the very nature of their respective positions, the majority of the representative offices and, to labour a word, the best interests of the representatives have in the main continued to be served! There you have the real trouble. Unless the superior numbers of Company and Senior Company officers in the Association assert themselves and achieve a *pro rata* representation on the Central Council, I foresee the logical result of the present tendencies—an Association in which resignations and disinterest are progressive until its declining membership consists of little more than Central and Regional Executives!

WHY THE HIGH SUBSCRIPTION?

In conclusion, it is essential to raise the question of finance, because I feel that the subscription of £2 2s. 0d. per year is excessive, having regard to all the circumstances. The N.F.S.O.A. as it is now constituted is a temporary war-time organization. It must necessarily identify itself with the National Fire Service, itself a war-time organization with a life to which a term will be set by the eventual implementation of the Home Secretary's promise to Local Authorities, or, in all essentials, by the end of the war with Germany.

It is considered, therefore, that a basic feature of the Association's financial policy should be to limit income to that figure only which is required for current needs, with a modest allowance for contingencies. Why then are subscriptions still so high as to permit the Association to invest capital in Government loans?

The prevailing tardiness in payment of subscriptions is due in part to the feeling among temporary officers that an unreasonably large proportion of their subscriptions is being devoted to the capitalization of a post-war professional Association, and to allay these suspicions I submit that a statement of financial policy backed by a balance sheet (*not* statements of receipts and expenses) should be issued at an early date by the Central Council for consideration at Area and Regional levels. Prominence in that statement should be given to the Association's present and future financial commitments and to the *eventual use for which the capital reserve is earmarked, or the contingencies against which it is held.*

A SMALL FIRE

THE quiet of the mid-day hour brooded over the town. Coy.O. Mence nodded over the jigsaw puzzle laid out on the table before him, endeavouring, without much success, to keep at bay the narcotic effects of a large dinner, the hum of distant traffic and the drone of a fly against the sunny window.

The piece he held in his hand seemed to change its shape as he gazed somewhat vacantly at it. He shut one eye in an effort to concentrate. It was a disastrous move—the other one promptly followed suit.

The phone bell spoilt everything, just as he was landing the biggest pike ever on to the bank of a peace-time river. The splash of the returning fish was still in his ears as he groped his way to the phone.

"Spence meaking—I mean Mence speaking," he mumbled.

The quiet, dry voice of his north country mobilizing officer insinuated its broad Yorkshire accent into his ear.

"A small job at 39 High Street. Section Leader and 4 men attending."

"Oakeydoke," Mence answered coarsely, "he can see to that. I shan't be down."

He returned to his jigsaw and settled down for the remaining portion of his dinner hour. But somehow things didn't seem the same. It must have been that blasted phone call—sort of shook him up so that he didn't feel like snoozing again and even the puzzle didn't seem so inviting.

As he gazed gloomily at the pile of pieces still to be fitted, he idly thought of the call.

"Dinner time—umph—usual pan of fat I suppose. Plenty of stink, plenty of excitement and another darn 433 to make out. Gee! that one fits anyhow. Dammit, no it doesn't, it cuts his head off. This is getting me down—must be getting old or something. Good chap the Section Leader. He'll have it out by now and probably lecturing the woman on careless cooking. Let's see, No. 39—that'll be Mrs. Jackson. No, she's No. 35. Can't be Mrs. Smith, she's in hospital. No. 39—No. 39 let's see—No. 39 HELL!"

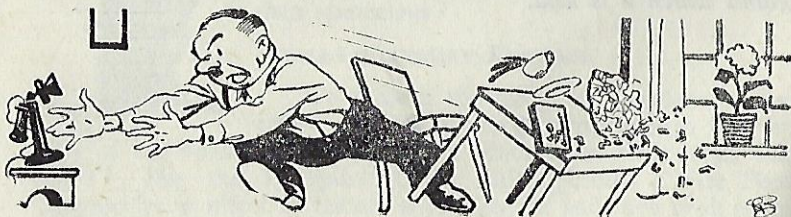
The chair went over with a crash. He grabbed the phone and beat a tattoo on the hook.

"That fire call—where did you say it was?"

"39 High Street."

"Why, that's the Station!"

"Aye—an' it's in your b— office!"



Accelerating Fire Calls

Is the Street Alarm System Out-of-date?

THE flames were through the roof before the Fire Service arrived." Thus ran the account of the fire in the newspaper after yet another building had been lost because the call was delayed and those first vital moments were denied to the firemen. It has been said that the delayed call is the greatest ally of fire, and it is the task of the post-war Fire Service to break that alliance.

To call the Fire Service in pre-war days, it was often necessary to know, firstly, the Local Authority Area in which the fire was situated and, secondly, the location and telephone number of that Authority's Brigade. Since members of the public, particularly in rural areas, were frequently ignorant of one or both of these points, the wrong Brigade might be called and much time lost in transferring the call. Again, since most station fire grounds were also complete Local Authority Areas, fires were in many cases attended not by the nearest unit which might be in a neighbouring Authority's area, but by the so-called "local" brigade anything up to 15 miles or so away.

SYSTEMS WITH SERIOUS DEFECTS

In order to eliminate delays in calls, a large number of Local Authorities, including some that administered large rural areas, installed street fire alarm systems to give direct communication with their fire stations. These systems, despite their undoubted mechanical efficiency, have serious defects in practice. Chief amongst these is the fact that in the majority of systems only the location of the fire alarm box—not that of the fire—is known at the receiving station. Consequently the caller must stay at the box until the arrival of the first appliance.

To stand waiting at a fire alarm box, even for a few minutes, whilst some distance away one's house and possessions are burning, is a considerable strain on the calmest of people, and it is not therefore surprising that the appliance crew may have to search for their fire because the caller has deserted the fire alarm. In addition, these systems, which require a considerable amount of time to be spent upon them in maintenance work and routine testing, seem to be used most frequently for transmitting false alarms rather than for actual fire calls. Most of these systems were installed in the early days of the telephone when public call boxes were few and far between. Now, however, most fire alarm boxes are within sight of a telephone kiosk which gives vocal contact with the fire station and makes possible a quicker arrival at the fire, whilst the caller may immediately return to the fire to render any assistance he can in the meantime. The same vocal contact also appears to deter those people whose sense of humour(?) impels them to use the fire alarm box as a form of amusement. It seems, therefore, that the street fire alarm system could well be replaced by the telephone kiosk.

Accelerating Fire Calls

RE-CASTING STATION FIRE GROUNDS

In the post-war service it will be obviously necessary to recast station fire grounds to suit the changed conditions. Also, since the pre-war boundaries were not in most cases conducive to efficiency, it would be well to shape the new fire grounds according to the plan of communications. Let all station grounds, therefore, be based on telephone exchange areas, and let each telephone exchange follow the present practice and exhibit the telephone number of the nearest Fire Station for the area covered. If this were done a caller would then need only to inform the exchange operator that the Fire Service was required and the call would automatically be put through to the appropriate station.

In order that calls may be accepted and directed to the Fire Station in the quickest possible way, a definite emergency number should be adopted nationally for all automatic exchanges, after the style of the '999' system already adopted in London. The public would then be instructed by means of notices in telephone directories and on the walls of telephone kiosks that this number should be dialled for all emergencies (including, of course, fire) and that the operator should then merely be asked for the appropriate service. Where automatic exchanges are of the unattended type, the emergency number would be connected to the appropriate trunk and toll exchange and the appropriate 'fire number' would be exhibited over the block of 'jacks' at which terminate the lines from the unattended exchange.

USE OF EMERGENCY BUTTONS

Where manual exchanges are installed, emergency calls from public telephones could be dealt with on a priority basis by the use of emergency buttons which would evoke instant response from the exchange instead of the call being accepted in rotation. The only type of emergency call which could not then be given priority over all other traffic would be the call given from a private telephone in a manual exchange area as, although emergency buttons could be provided, it is unlikely that the Telephone Authorities could undertake the task, especially as the majority of such exchanges are likely to become automatic within a few years of the end of the War.

The question of the division of the country into geographical areas for fire call purposes has not been overlooked, but this method does not seem to be practicable because fire calls, particularly those emanating from rural areas, are pre-eminently dependant on telephone facilities. Hence, in order to direct calls to the appropriate stations, it would be necessary either to place a list of fire numbers and the areas they serve in each kiosk or to give each exchange a similar but larger list. In either case a somewhat serious delay would be caused, and the possibility of error would always be present.

PROBLEM OF THE PART-TIME STATION

If the system suggested is adopted, and the call has been directed to a whole-time station, all requirements have been satisfied, as the

Accelerating Fire Calls

appliance will be turned out immediately. What of the part-time station? Here the call must be dealt with in three stages. The call must be received by a suitable person; the men must be turned out to the station; the location of the fire must then be communicated to them. In the past, arrangements have been made with the Police and other public services to accept the call and to turn out the appliances. Alternatively, the calls have been transmitted to the Chief Officer's residence and he or one of his household has been responsible for the further action required. Can we improve on this?

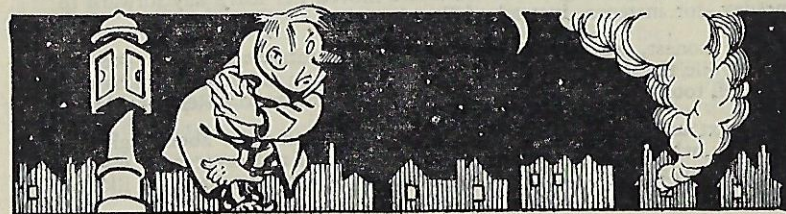
One improvement is, of course, obvious: that is, to have at least one whole-time man always on duty to accept calls and to ensure that the appliances are always ready for an immediate turn-out. Failing this, however, it is suggested that some improvement could be obtained by installing the control for the calling-out system in the telephone exchange (a complete G.P.O. circuit could be utilized, with bells and/or telephones in each man's house). The first man to arrive at the station would then contact the emergency operator at the exchange and ascertain the location of the fire.

THE RADIO

Having dealt with the initial turn-out, there is the matter of delays occurring in connection with assistance messages. Nearly all such delays occur in rural areas where telephone facilities are not easily available. The obvious solution to the problem is the use of radio on a far greater scale than is at present permitted. Screening and similar difficulties could be overcome to a great extent by the use of telescopic aerials, whilst range could be increased in peace-time to that now attained by military mobile apparatus. It would not appear to be necessary to operate on a considerable number of wave lengths, as it is hardly likely that a large number of fires requiring wireless communication would be in progress in any given radio area than could be handled by the control station. By the combination of wireless communication with a carefully-planned mutual assistance organization, it might be possible for appliances to be *en route* to a fire from a neighbouring station overhearing the assistance message before a formal request was received from the aided stations.

Such are my ideas for the acceleration of fire service communications. Others must have different ideas, and perhaps the Editor will lend his indulgence if I invite them to a joust in the correspondence columns.

N.I.C.K



WOMENS' Page

EUROPEAN WAR RELIEF FUND



Women Officers and Firewomen in No. 7 Area, Region 3, have entered wholeheartedly into the scheme for assisting the children of distressed countries. Both whole and part-time women have knitted small jerseys and matinee coats, and the work produced has been of excellent quality.

The completed garments were so attractive that it was decided to hold a display to stimulate interest and to encourage everyone to still further efforts. A prominent draper in Derby very kindly allowed us the use of his front windows, and the photograph gives an indication of the display which aroused considerable interest from the general public.

Many of the garments were sent to London and inspected by the Queen and Princess Elizabeth when they visited the Exhibition of work done by Firewomen held at Lambeth on 6th December, 1944.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

We have an Officers' Board in our office, we have ! Did you ever suffer from your superior being seized by the Board and/or Chart mania? Our last-Chief-but-one had it, and recently we observed with some horror that the symptoms were rapidly developing in our present one.

Our last-Chief-but-one had a beautiful Board. If was the child and pride of her brain, and it worked on the Square and Chalk system—that is, when it worked at all—being altered weekly as the officers' leave days moved forward. The Chief would look at it with a fond gleam in her eye and say, "Is so-and-so on duty to-day? . . . oh, yes, she is . . . Just ring her up, will you . . . ?", etc. We would then telephone the officer in question and probably find that (a) she had retired onto the sick list about five minutes ago ; (b) she had had to change her leave day and wasn't on duty at all, or (c) we ourselves had wrongly calculated at the beginning of the week and moved her leave day forward to Wednesday, for instance, instead of Tuesday.

To be honest, we never quite mastered the intricacies of the weekly overhaul, while the R.W.F.O., when asked her opinion of the treasure by our proud Chief, took one look at it and ambiguously murmured "Remarkable !".

Our next unhappy experience of this nature took place about eighteen months later, when our present Chief showed signs of restlessness for several weeks which eventually resolved into the fact that she thought she'd like to

Women's Page

have an Officers' Board. We looked discouraging, but it was of no use. A Board-hunt was at once instigated, and we were instructed to formulate the actual design. We did so, with a certain amount of strain and pain, and sent the effort off to the officer who was kindly seeing to the construction of the whole affair.

Some time afterwards she rang us up to ask for a repetition of the design, as someone had mislaid it. This, of course, was an awkward request. We knew perfectly well that we'd never be able to evolve the thing again (we'd hardly understood what we meant in the first place), and had to confess as much. Eventually, the officer considerably said that she'd try to remember what we'd intended, since we couldn't, and in the course of time the Board arrived. Nothing to do with the Square and Chalk system this time, but designed on the Hook and Tally method, just for a change.

The Chief gazed at it lovingly, and wondered where she'd put it. We were fairly unhelpful, but stood firm against her desire to work it in where she required it by moving one cupboard, two desks, a chair and a filing cabinet—a redistribution which would, we saw with alarm, leave us hidden behind a large cupboard and no longer able to look through the window in the door and observe everything which was going on in the passage outside.

In the end, compromise was reached by the removal of a shelf and a row of coat-hooks. During the Christmas season we grew rather fond of the new acquisition, because it really looked quite pretty when, in addition to its various coloured tallies, we'd improved its colour scheme by slinging a large piece of holly across it.

P.S. The Chief was away for Christmas !

M.B.

THE WOMEN'S WING AT THE NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE

January 1942 to January 1945

Since the Women's Wing of the National Fire Service College opened on 28th January, 1942, nearly 2,800 women students have passed through its doors. The main object has been the training of Women Officers and Instructors. The latter have attended the College for various courses in connection with instructing and training generally, and it is mainly from these that the Instructors for all the Training Schools throughout England, Scotland and Wales have been drawn. In consequence, the effect of the College teaching has been widespread, and has formed the basis for instructing Firewomen of all ranks from the lowest to the highest.

Nearly every Senior Woman Officer has, at one time or another been a student at the College, though the courses arranged for these officers have been more in the nature of discussions and conferences. The opportunities to meet, exchange views and discuss Service difficulties under pleasant conditions were much appreciated. It is, in fact, this ability to meet people from all over Great Britain which has helped so many women officers to understand the conditions under which their fellow officers and their Firewomen have worked and it has assisted them to profit by each other's experience and speedily discover improvements made. Possibly the aspect of the College has proved of even more value than any other part of its work, and it is only fair to say that the majority of the students have been fully aware of this fact.

All kinds of courses have been run, designed to assist Firewomen in every sphere of their work, from Mobilizing Officers to Mobile Instructors ; although certain types of courses which were more suitable for Area or other training schools were naturally omitted.

The difficulty that faced the Wing on its opening was to set a standard and discover just what instruction was necessary for teaching women's work in the Service. Whether this has been attained can only be answered by those who have the interests of the Service at heart and who have seen the results of the College teaching.

Women's Page

In the very early days, O.C.T.U. courses were held, but these were soon superseded by courses for Junior and Senior Officers as it was considered of greater value that the officer be taught how to carry out her duties rather than to use the course to let her attain the qualifying standard of officership.

One enormous task which the College undertook was the training of Instructors, and when it is realized that there were hardly any women in the Service who had any knowledge of, or qualifications for teaching, the magnitude of the task will be appreciated. Some 980 would-be instructors passed through the College, and every kind of Instructors' Course was arranged for them. A general four weeks' course, designed to give the prospective instructor the outlines of her job and set her on the right road; a two weeks' course for Instructors of Recruits; a Discussion Course for Officers in charge of Training Schools; a Course for Senior Instructors, another for Mobilizing Instructors, and, finally, courses for Mobile Instructors.

Perhaps the latter courses were those which taxed the College to its utmost. The whole question of Mobile Instruction came up like a summer thunderstorm to meet the emergency caused by pre-"D Day" operations, which had necessitated the closing of all training schools and the redistribution of Firewomen. In less than 26 weeks the College had to plan a suitable course and train 340 Instructors in a new art which was a complete reversal of all its previous teaching. That this task was accomplished is no small feather in its cap.

As time passed it became obvious that more practical and less theoretical work was necessary for officers, and all syllabi were accordingly revised so that this object could be attained. Many of the elementary subjects which had at first been included, such as Organization of the Service, Stirrup Pump Drill, Ranks and Markings and Telephony, were no longer considered necessary, and were, therefore, dropped.

Three Fitness Training Courses were held at the College, but the College Instructors merely held a "watching brief." Fitness training instruction was given entirely by the Central Council of Physical Recreation, Area Officer Haddelsey assisting with the last two courses.

The Part-Time Officers were not forgotten. During the summer months of 1942, 1943 and 1944, courses for these officers were held, and in all some 380 students attended. It should be remembered that in the vast majority of cases these women gave up part of their holidays to attend the College, and we feel that their public spirit and sense of duty should be given the highest praise.

During the three years there have been some two dozen different members of the Instructional Staff, and as these were drawn from all over Great Britain, good co-operation was established between students and staff. Mrs. Stoneham has been the Supervisor of Women's Studies for the whole of the period, and it is a pleasurable fact that her work and the work of the Women's Wing was recognized by the award to her of the M.B.E.

Of the original team who started on 28th January, 1942, Miss Forrest and Miss Kelly were the only ones who remained until the end. On Miss Forrest, who has been a Senior Instructor for two-and-a-half years, fell the bulk of the work of organizing and running the Instructor Courses, and nearly every instructor in the Service has had some training from her at one time or another. There have been, in all, some six Senior Instructors at the College (though never more than three at any one time), who have been in charge of the various courses; latterly, a Group Officer has been attached to each course, with a number of Assistant Group Officers as Squad Instructors. It is an interesting fact that very few of the staff, once appointed, have ever left because they wished to change their job. Most of them stayed from eighteen months to two years before returning to operational duties.

One could go on in this strain, recounting the happenings and amusing incidents that have occurred, but it is felt that the foregoing will have given a reasonably clear picture of the Women's Wing at the National Fire Service College.—G.H.

FIRE BRIGADE APPLIANCES

Ideas on Post-War Design

LOOKING back over a period of years, the Fire Service has passed through various periods of vehicle design known to personnel as "Braidwood", "New World" and "Limousine", whilst the present-day tendency could be classified as "Utility."

I must say that I am a convert from the old type of self-propelled pump. The trailer has taken its correct place in the Service and should it fall to my lot to design a Fire Engine in the future, I would incorporate a trailer pump.

Consider what this war has given to the Fire Service operationally:—

- Standardization,
- Radio Communication,
- Trailer Pumps,
- Hose Laying Lorries,
- Mobile Dam Units, and
- Mobilizing System.

At present we have large numbers of the above-named appliances, but, when the world gets back to normal, need we dispense with these things? Must we be bound down to numerous types of appliances in post-war days? Why not standardize one appliance incorporating everything that is best in all our types?

The Fire Service and Motor Trade together are capable of designing a machine embodying the following features:—

- Limousine Body,
- Large capacity hose reel tank (100—200 gallons),
- Hose-laying facilities,
- Driver's cabin having use as Control Unit,
- Field telephone connection.

Great strides have been made in aluminium steel alloys and a vehicle carrying a 50 ft. ladder made of this type of material would be suitable for most towns in this country.

If the Fire Service were to standardize four appliances, as under in my opinion this would increase the operational efficiency generally:—

- General Service Appliance (*as illustrated*),
- Mechanical Ladder,
- Breathing Apparatus Tender,
- Salvage Appliance.

To proceed further with the design of the General Service Appliance. A Trailer pump giving, say, 700 g.p.m. could be designed of much lighter weight than the present 500 g.p.m. trailer, by the use of aluminium alloys. In the Post-War Service greater attention, too, will be given to Methyl Bromide and CO₂. The hose reels in my sketch are duplicated, but one could be connected to a battery of CO₂ cylinders, which might be carried low down on the chassis, below the floor line, and which would help to counteract the top weight of water. Should

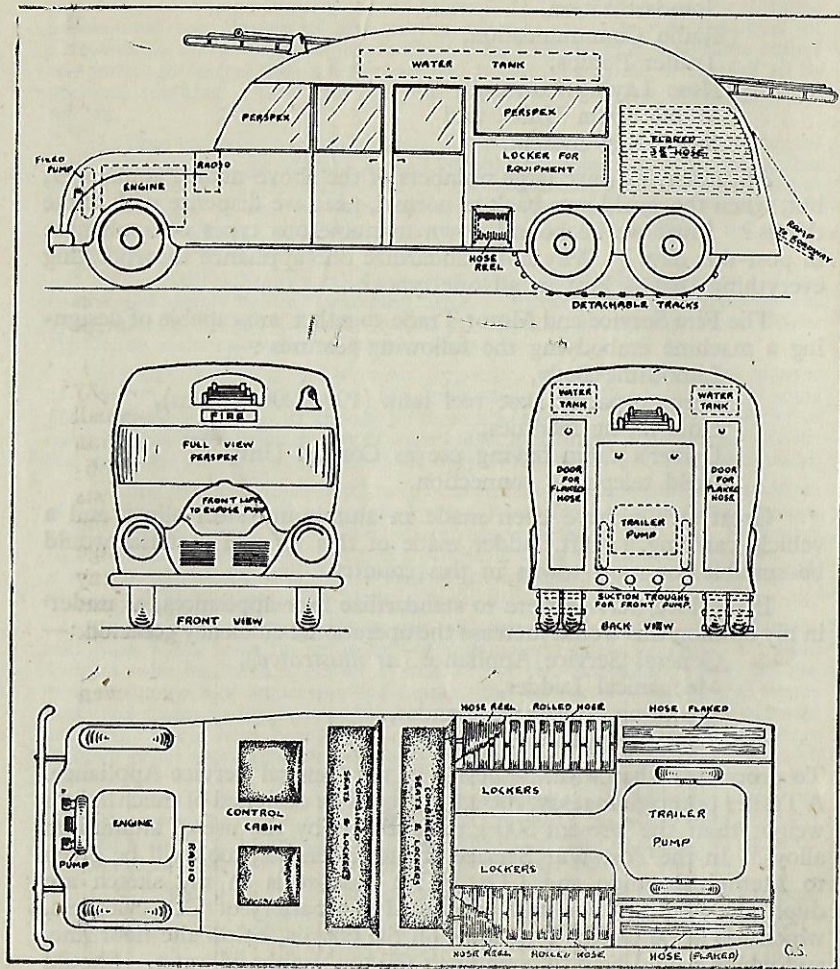
Fire Brigade Appliances

this prove top-heavy, the positions of cylinders and water tanks could be reversed.

The telephones in the front cabin would also be fitted with a reel of cable whereby they could be attached to the nearest exchange telephone or line. Better still, give the Fire Service its own wave length, and each General Service Appliance could carry a radio set with a two-way range of approximately 10 miles, sufficient for normal use.

I would point out that I am not an automobile engineer, but a practical fire officer with some peacetime experience. No doubt there are constructional faults in my sketches. Perhaps other readers have their own practical ideas as regards design of appliances, and if so, I for one would like to see them in print, as a basis for future discussion.

C.S.



"The King of Special Appliances"

By A. McM.

THE experience of multiple fires, uncontrolled conflagrations and all the difficulties accompanying the use of fire as an offensive weapon of war developed to an extensive degree the use of Special Appliances in the Fire Service.

Many of these Special Appliances fully justified their cost and maintenance; others have never been required except for exercises. As the dangers of raids become less, and the manpower in the Service is reduced, many of these valuable war-time Special Appliances become automatically redundant because they cannot be manned.

There is one appliance, born since Nationalization, which, if properly used, will repay the cost of maintenance and manning over and over again, raise the status of the Service in the eyes of the public and local authorities, keep up the interest and morale of the personnel and give them a sense of pride in their work. I refer to the Pump Salvage Tender.

In September, 1941, when pitchforked like many other officers into new territory, I was very perturbed at the air-raid mentality at lull-period fires. Personnel were inclined to think in terms of from 500 to 1,000 g.p.m., causing very extensive water damage, where 50 to 100 g.p.m. for a few minutes to check the fire was all that was necessary. This position has been entirely changed since the introduction of the Pump Salvage Tender.

In the Division referred to, which will be comparable with many other Divisions throughout the country, one large and one small County is covered, with a number of Burghs ranging in population from 5,000 to 40,000. The Pump Salvage Tender is the second appliance to all built-up areas, or any rural risk if the initial message suggests it may be useful. The improvements are very marked. In 1941 the victims of a lull-period fire accepted the accompanying water damage as part of the price paid for having a fire. In 1944, however, many written and verbal compliments for the condition in which the premises were left by the Pump Salvage Tender Crew have been received. This reflects very creditably on the Service.

Long may the Pump Salvage Tender be kept on the run, even for those fires which occur away from the large cities.

It is the aim of this journal to encourage the fullest freedom of opinion and expression within the Association. Unless the fact is expressly stated, therefore, views put forward in these pages, whether in the Editorial columns or in articles, should not necessarily be regarded as expressing the considered policy of the Association.

The "Fire Department" of Canada

By COLUMN OFFICER P. F. ENRIGHT

Corps of Canadian Fire Fighters

(Captain of Vancouver Fire Dept. on leave of absence)



IN order that the reader may realize the futility of attempting to give other than a general idea of Fire Department organization in an article of this length, a few salient facts as to the vastness of this Dominion may be cited. Canada has an East to West width of well over 3,000 miles and an overall area of some 3,700,000 square miles. For comparison it is slightly less in area than the United States; one-quarter as large again as Australia; twice the area of India; thirty times the size of the British Isles and comprises 27% of the total area of the British Empire. It requires five full days' travel by trans-continental

train to cross; has 41,000 miles of railroad, exclusive of railroad yards and sidings; a population of but 11,500,000 people, and many differences in climatic conditions resulting in varying types of building construction. It will thus be seen how impossible it would be to provide any great detail on the subject matter in the space available.

Local Authority Basis

Fire Brigades, or "Fire Departments" as they are termed in Canada, are organized on a Municipal or Local Authority basis and operate financially on an Annual Budget system. The Chief, as Head of the Fire Department, submits in like manner to other Civic Department Heads an annual estimate of monies required for the ensuing year, following which appropriations are made by the City Council from estimated civic revenues and allocated to the various Departments.

Generally speaking, the majority of Canadian cities maintain full-time professional Fire Departments, but few, if any, employ a personnel strength as recommended by the Fire Underwriters Association, i.e. an "on-duty" strength of one fireman per 1,000 of the population. Some of the smaller cities and towns maintain but a skeleton staff of professionals, augmented in outbreaks of fire by trained volunteers. Rural municipalities usually operate on a well-organized, but entirely voluntary, basis.

Administration of Canadian Fire Departments is, as a rule, vested in the Chief, who is responsible for the efficiency of the Department to the City Council, usually through what is termed the Fire Committee of the Council. For operational purposes, the larger cities are divided into Districts embodying several Fire Station areas and in charge of

The "Fire Department" of Canada

District Chiefs whose duties are somewhat similar to those of a National Fire Service operational Column Officer. District Chiefs are responsible to the Chief and his Deputies, and they, in turn, are responsible for covering the city at large and for the authorization of inter-city emergency assistance. In many instances fire-coverage is provided by city Departments for adjoining municipalities. Financial arrangements are usually on an annual charge basis with fire-coverage being contingent on the city's ability to spare men and apparatus.

Ranks and Markings

Officers' rank markings are far from uniform throughout Canadian Departments, but generally speaking, the Chiefs' grades are distinguishable by gold buttons and gold braid and the lower ranks by silver buttons and silver braid. Some Departments employ lapel badges of varying designs, while others use ringed arm bands on similar lines to Naval or Air Force procedure. As a rule, Officer rank markings may be taken as:—

CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT	Gold cap badge and gold lapel badges bearing five crossed bugles, or three gold arm bands, or both.
DEPUTY CHIEFS	.. Gold cap and lapel badges bearing three crossed bugles, or two gold arm bands, or both.
DISTRICT CHIEFS	.. Gold cap and lapel badges bearing two crossed bugles, or single gold arm bands, or both.
CAPTAINS (Senior Station Officers)	.. Silver cap and lapel badges bearing two vertical bugles, or two silver arm bands, or both.
LIEUTENANTS (Junior Station Officers)	.. Silver cap and lapel badges bearing single vertical bugles, or single silver arm band, or both.

All the larger Departments are now provided with a Central Fire Alarm Station for receiving and relaying alarms to Stations. Alarms of fire are usually designated as (1) Box Alarms, i.e. those received from street boxes similar to those in use in this country; (2) Telephone Alarms, which are by far the most common, due to the fact that nine out of ten homes now have telephones, (3) Still or Verbal Alarms, i.e. those received at Stations by people reporting them in person.

For the purpose of augmenting the strength of the "on-duty" platoon during serious outbreaks, telephones or alarm bells are sometimes installed at the city's expense in the firemen's homes, and "off duty" members are required to return to duty in the event of "on duty" platoon being unable to handle the situation. However, to my knowledge, no municipality has provided firemen's dwellings or accommodation in the immediate vicinity of fire stations as is the custom in the U.K. Firemen are permitted to live anywhere within the corporate limits. The practice of calling in the "off duty" platoon has now been prohibited by recent legislation in the province of Ontario.

Selecting and Training Recruits

Recruits for the Department are selected by the Chief from a list of applicants (usually many on file), and they are given a rigid medical examination prior to being taken into the Service as Probationers. Varying periods of probation are in vogue, but from three to six months is the usual period of training under close observation and under actual fire conditions before being officially appointed to the permanent staff. Applicants are usually selected from within the age groups of 21 to 27 years and of not less than a specified height and weight. The age restriction is imposed, as many of the larger departments have a pension scheme under which members above the age of 28 are not eligible to participate. Such restrictions have, for the duration of the war, been eliminated in many Departments. Following appointment to the regular staff, a period of three to four years is required to reach "first class fireman" grade and salary.

Promotions are usually made on a basis of "Seniority with Ability," examinations and tests being given to determine theoretical knowledge and practical ability in the handling of men, equipment and fire ground problems.

Most Departments maintain efficient Fire Prevention and Research branches for carrying out inspections, drafting required Fire Bylaws, advising on building construction, supervision of industrial and domestic oil-fuel installations, etc., and the study of modern methods and equipment for combating fire, especially in regard to the newer industrial materials and processes.

Salvage work is carried on by many Departments as part of their regular duties, but is mostly confined to what can be done to alleviate damage from fire, water and smoke during the actual outbreak only. Emergency repairs, such as making temporary covers for damaged roofs, etc., are carried out, but the salvage of goods and materials after the fire is extinguished is considered a matter for the individual owner or Insurance Company's attention.

Military and Naval Establishments are usually in detached areas and maintain their own fire fighting staffs, with assistance being freely given by adjacent Municipal Departments as required. High-risk installations, such as petroleum products, etc., are now confined to specified areas by local Fire Bylaws, which require adequate fire-fighting installations and equipment being maintained by the Companies concerned. Training of Company employees in the use of such equipment is carried on under the supervision of the local Fire Department Officials, and has proven of great assistance to the professional fire-fighters when such establishments have been involved in outbreaks of fire.

University Extension Courses

In order to increase efficiency of Canadian Fire Departments, University Extension Courses on the prevention and extinguishment of fires have been inaugurated. Such courses are usually arranged by either the Dominion Fire Commissioner's office or by one of the nine

Provincial Fire Marshal's offices whose duties include the compiling of fire loss statistics, investigation of suspected arson cases, the promoting of legislation for the prevention of fire and the safeguarding of the public against loss by fire. It is hoped that sometime in the future, a Canadian Fire College, similar to the N.F.S. College, Brighton, may be established.

Fire Department hours of duty vary a great deal, but in most instances a Two-Platoon system is in operation with members working either a 10-hour day and 14-hour night, or a system of 24 hours on and 24 hours off. One day-off per week is allowed as the general rule. The three-platoon or 8-hour day has already been approved by the municipal authorities in one Ontario city, with others having taken the necessary steps to do so at the cessation of hostilities, in Ontario and other provinces.

Salaries

Firemen's salaries vary in many respects, due to differences in cost of living and the degree of organization attained by individual Departments in promoting better working conditions, etc. The city of Toronto may be said to lead other Departments in the matter of salaries. Latest figures available for this Department are as follows:—

Chief	\$6,420.00
Deputy Chief .. .	\$5,350.00
District Chief .. .	\$3,264.00
Captain .. .	\$2,515.00
First year Firemen ..	\$1,554.00
First class Firemen ..	\$2,086.00
(after 3 years service)	

NOTE: Current rate of exchange, £1 equals \$4.47.

Since these figures were published an announcement has been made of an increase in the pay of First Class Firemen to \$2,520.00, with comparable increases assumed to have been made for the other ranks.

Most firefighters are members of Trade Unions, holding affiliation with either their respective Provincial Association or the International Association of Fire Fighters of America. Canadian Fire Chiefs have their own Associations, both Provincial and Dominion-wide in character, holding Annual Conventions of an educational character which are usually well attended.

Forest Fire Rangers

Although Municipal firefighters quite often attend small brush or grass fires in their respective areas, what is termed a Forest Fire or a Prairie Fire is an altogether different affair. These constitute the principal hazard in undeveloped or unorganized territory, not only to tracts of standing timber or fields of grain, but to the many remote settlements as well.

To combat such hazards, the Dominion and Provincial Governments maintain a large and efficient staff of Forest Fire Rangers,

The "Fire Department" of Canada

i.e., fire-fighters specially trained for that type of work. Chief among their various duties may be cited the closing of danger areas to tourists, the closing down of logging enterprises during excessively-hot dry periods, arranging for the cutting of fire-breaks through forest regions, and in the Prairie Provinces, the enforcement of special fire-preventive measures. In the latter case, the individual farmer is required to maintain a complete fire-break round his various fields of approximately five furrows in width. In order that outbreaks of fire may be attacked in their incipient stage, special "look-out" posts are established from which the Forest Fire Rangers are able to plot fire locations.

In many instances, use is made of aircraft to locate fires and assess requirements prior to despatching men and equipment to the scene of operations. Provincial and Dominion laws empower Forest Fire Rangers to employ, or conscript, if necessary, men and material to control such outbreaks. Nominal hourly rates of pay are specified for such work, payable by the respective Government Department concerned.

An Intelligent, Scientific Profession

During the past quarter century, fire-fighting in Canada has gradually been accepted as a profession requiring a high degree of intelligence and not just "a strong back and a weak mind" as some would like to believe. As a result of this change in public opinion, salaries and working conditions have greatly improved, thereby attracting to the Fire Service a far better class of men than formerly. If we are to keep pace with the advance of science, its ever-new materials and processes, then we of the Fire Service must be prepared to continually raise our standard for entrants to the Service.

THE INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS

New President

The Council has elected Mr. A. B. Craig, O.B.E., M.I.Fire E., Principal Fire Staff Officer, Scotland, to succeed Mr. T. A. Varley as President of the Institution. Mr. Craig will assume office at the Annual General Meeting on 5th June, 1945.

On that date also, Mr. E. G. Hobbs (Member) will succeed Mr. T. H. Mather as a Vice-President.

Annual Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Institution will be held in Blackpool on the 5th, 6th and 7th June, 1945.

The Annual General Meeting itself will open the proceedings, in the afternoon of Tuesday, 5th June. The morning and afternoon sessions of the 6th and 7th will be occupied by lectures and discussions. Delegates and their ladies will be the guests of the Mayor and Corporation of Blackpool at a Civic Reception and Dance on the evening of the 5th June, and the Council is endeavouring to arrange some form of social entertainment for the following evening.

D. MACDOUGALD,
General Secretary.

PERSONALIA

The Home Office announces the following changes in National Fire Service appointments:—

Mr. T. H. BARKER, Fire Force Commander No. 3 (Sheffield) Fire Force has been discharged from the National Fire Service at his own request.

* * * * *

Mr. T. S. HARRISON, Assistant Fire Force Commander, No. 30 (East Kent) Fire Force has been transferred to No. 11 (Southend) Fire Force (vice Mr. W. T. Soper).

* * * * *

Mr. T. A. KELLY, Assistant Fire Force Commander No. 27 (Manchester) Fire Force has been transferred to No. 26 (Liverpool) Fire Force.

* * * * *

Mr. C. McKINLAY, Senior Staff Officer (Acting Assistant Fire Force Commander) at No. 2 (Leeds) Regional Headquarters has been seconded from the National Fire Service to the Control Commission for Germany (British Element).

Mr. H. J. REYNOLDS, Assistant Fire Force Commander No. 5 (Bradford) Fire Force has been appointed Fire Force Commander No. 3 (Sheffield) Fire Force (vice Mr. T. H. Barker).

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Mr. W. T. SOPER, Acting Assistant Fire Force Commander, No. 11 (Southend) Fire Force has been discharged from the National Fire Service at his own request.

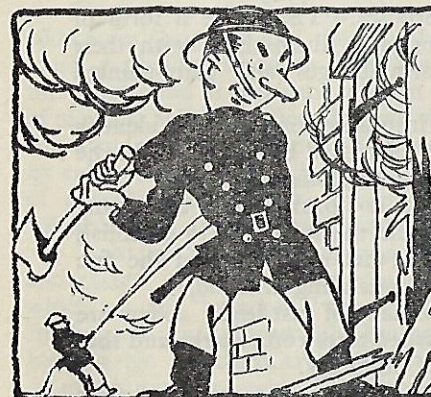
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Miss A. A. M. MacDONALD, Area Officer No. 2 (Middlesborough) Fire Force has been transferred to No. 1 (Newcastle) Fire Force (vice Mrs. Tylden).

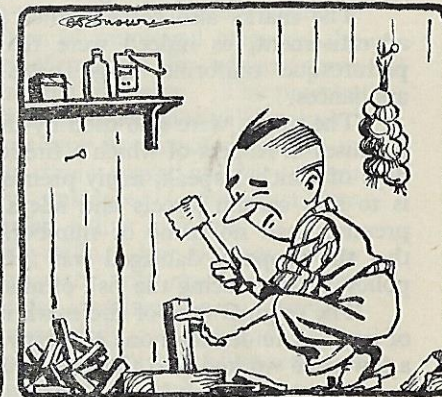
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Mrs. M. TYLDEN, Area Officer No. 1 (Newcastle) Fire Force has been discharged from the National Fire Service at her own request.

★ ★ ★



ON



AND

OFF

FIRE MARKS

I AM one of those wild-eyed, grasping, persistent pests which are labelled "collector." My weakness in this direction is in the acquisition of Fire Marks, and because I have so often been surprised at the lack of knowledge of these specimens on the part of those of my colleagues who discuss them with me, I thought I might be able to interest members of the Association if I explained why I am interested in these marks.

Fire marks came into being in 1667 as a result of the Great Fire of London, and can be described as signs or emblems which were fixed to premises in the early days of fire insurance by the company underwriting the risk.

The marks were usually nailed in some conspicuous place on the front of the insured premises. Favourite positions were just above the front door or between windows on the first floor, but this should not be regarded as invariable. Only a few weeks ago I saw a small Sun mark just under the eaves of a tall building and one of my latest acquisitions was taken from a position near a second floor window of a large tenement, where it was so inconspicuous that I had passed it many times without noticing it.

INSURANCE COMPANY BRIGADES

In order to protect their financial interests, many insurance companies maintained private fire brigades in the larger towns. In the early days of insurance brigades, a brigade was interested only in the property insured with its company, and the chief purpose of the marks was to indicate to the brigade whether a fire was its particular responsibility. It appears that for many years insurance brigades refused to help one another and if one of these brigades arrived at a fire and found the premises bearing the mark of a rival company, it either returned to its station or stood by to watch, and not infrequently jeer and harangue the brigade of the rival company.

The marks also served other purposes. They were a form of advertisement, as indeed were the brigades themselves, with their picturesque uniforms, large brass arm badges and gaily-painted appliances.

The marks were also used by the insurance companies to identify premises in respect of which a fire loss claim had been made. In the days of which I speak, many premises had no official location. That is to say, certain streets and alleys had no formal name and many premises had no name or number. The mark helped to establish that the property damaged was actually that referred to in the fire policy, thus reducing the risk of misunderstanding or fraud.

The original type of fire mark is usually of cast lead. A few are of iron. I understand one company issued terra cotta marks and that a few were worked into the masonry of buildings.

The marks vary in size from six to twelve inches high and four to ten inches wide. They usually portray the emblem of the insurance

company concerned and were originally painted in bright colours. Those which have actually served the purposes for which they were designed have, of course, been affected by weather and are no longer brightly coloured.

Two appropriately designed marks—a Sun and a Hand-in-Hand—are illustrated on page 24. Another well-known mark, of which there of seven variants, is that of the Royal Exchange Office. It shows the second Royal Exchange, which was built after the Great Fire of London, as it appeared before it was itself burnt down in 1838.

COATS OF ARMS AND POLICY NUMBERS

In a number of instances where the insurance company bears the name of the town or county in which it was founded, the appropriate Coat of Arms is included in the design of the plate—as can be seen in the case of the marks of Aberdeen, Bath, Bristol, Dundee, Newcastle, Norwich and Salop offices. The Salop mark illustrated bears the Arms of the town of Shrewsbury.

Most of the marks indicate the number of the policy for the insurance of the property on a strip at the bottom of the emblem. The policy numbers were usually stamped into the metal, but it was a feature of some of the earlier marks that figures such as 0 and 8 were completely stamped out. Another novel feature on some of the earlier marks was the use of a figure one shaped like a letter J. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the Sun marks.

About 1800, thin copper and tinned iron were introduced by most companies into the manufacture of marks, presumably on account of cost. Policy numbers were stamped on some of these marks in much the same way as the lead marks, while on others the numbers were painted or gilded on the base strip—as on certain variations of the Globe, Norwich Union and Phoenix plates. Weather soon affects paint or gilt and it is not often one can find, in a legible condition, a policy number which has been so marked.

INTRODUCTION OF PLATES

With improvement in the co-operation between insurance companies' brigades and the introduction of municipal brigades, the mark gradually ceased to fulfil the chief purpose for which it was introduced and at this time it again changed in design. The practice of marking policy numbers died out and the new design usually included the name of the company. This newer type is normally referred to by collectors as a "plate." In course of time it served only as a means of advertisement and is consequently considered to be much less valuable than the old lead marks bearing policy numbers.

It is not possible to draw a clearly-defined line between marks and plates. It is generally accepted that the true mark is the sign which actually "marked" the property for identification by insurance fire brigades, and this usually, but not necessarily, means a lead policy-bearing sign. A considerable knowledge of the subject is often required to enable one to establish the identity of a true mark, owing to the varying dates when rival insurance brigades agreed to assist one another

and municipal brigades became established, thereby rendering marks unnecessary. Also because certain companies maintained brigades when they were not issuing lead or policy-bearing marks, whilst other companies which issued lead marks were established after some municipal fire brigades. There are collectors who have no interest in the thin copper or tinned iron marks or plates, but most are pleased to strengthen their collection with the greater number of attractive plates and to overlook the difficult line of demarcation.

MARKS WITH A HISTORY

It is possible sometimes to "date" a mark or plate, either by the policy number or by a knowledge of the history of the insurance company. In the case of those with numbers, it is obvious that of a number of marks of the same office, the mark with the lowest number is the oldest and most valuable. I have been able, through the courtesy of the insurance companies concerned, to get details of the policies once associated with some of my numbered marks and this, of course, adds materially to the interest.

The Sun mark illustrated was issued in 1770 to one William Farquharson, saddler, in respect of "his House only, not quite finished, situate on the West Side of the Broadgate of Aberdeen, fronting the street" The premises were insured for £300 at a premium of 6/-.

The Hand-in-Hand mark illustrated was issued in 1816 to "WILLIAM GRIMLEY of Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, Gentleman and ANN JONES," in respect of "two houses situate on the West Side of Vauxhall Walk in the Parish of St. Mary at Lambeth abutting north on a passage and in possession of Norris & Lewson." The premises were insured for £400.

Unfortunately, I have been unable to get details of the policy associated with the Salop mark illustrated. The old Salop office was absorbed by the Alliance office in 1890, and a few years ago all the old records were destroyed. The office was established in 1780 and from the low policy number and the knowledge that the office later used copper plates with the word "Salop" in place of the number, one is able to assume that the mark illustrated was issued between 1780 and 1800. I have been able to ascertain that the mark was, in fact, issued prior to 1794.

In "dating" marks or plates which bear no policy number, one is sometimes helped by the history of the companies concerned. Many companies which issued marks or plates went out of business, amalgamated with other companies or changed their names after a comparatively short life. For example, the Bristol Union Company was established in 1814 and was absorbed by the Imperial Company in 1844. The mark of the Bristol Union Company showed a bundle of sticks tied in the centre, with "Bristol" above and "Union" below, whereas the Imperial plates, of which there are several variations, are bell shaped and each show a crown. The Imperial office was itself absorbed by the Alliance in 1902, but by this time the practice of issuing plates had ceased.

Many of the plates show the name of the company and also the date when it was established. When a date is shown without the word "Established" or "Incorporated," the uninformed are apt to think the date shown to be the date of issue. This is far from being the case and there may well be a difference of 150 years between the two dates. One Union copper plate is a good example of this. It shows the date of "A.D. 1714." The Union office originally issued numbered lead marks and no doubt did not change to the thin plates, of which this office has issued eight variants, until the 19th Century. The plate to which I have referred appears to be more modern than others issued by the same company, and was probably issued late in the century.

VARIATIONS IN DESIGN

The majority of the insurance companies issued more than one design of mark or plate, often using more than one metal. According to my works of reference on the matter, the Sun office heads the list with 29 variants, 19 being of lead, 6 of iron, and 4 of copper. The variations in the case of lead marks depend upon small differences in design. The profiles differ in size, are flatter or rounder, or have variations in the markings of the eyes or lips.

The Norwich Union office is thought to have issued 19 variants, the Phoenix 17, the Hand-in-Hand and the London Assurance 13, and the Royal, Royal Exchange and Union 12 each.

It is not possible accurately to assess the number of marks and plates issued. The most complete list in my possession shows 451 variants issued by 148 offices in Great Britain and Ireland.

Some enthusiasts include in their collections marks and plates of our Colonies and of foreign countries—some issued by British companies—and also what are termed "modern" plates. These latter plates are usually enamelled tin, resembling in varying degrees the original plates of the companies concerned. They were obviously made for advertisement purposes, not necessarily in connection with fire, and are practically valueless in a collection.

COLLECTORS AND COLLECTIONS

It has been a matter of some surprise to me that so few of our profession are collectors of fire marks and plates, but we have among our associates some who have attained some reputation in this connection. Ex-Chief Officer J. H. Buckle of Chippenham has probably the finest collection in the world. He is said to have upwards of 800 specimens and his collection was inspected by Queen Mary a short while ago. Ex-Firemaster A. Pordage once had a famous collection, which I believe has since been disposed of Mr. G. H. Hindson, of Messrs. Dennis Bros., is another keen collector, but limits his collection to lead marks. Lord Roseberry, Regional Commissioner for Scotland, is the fortunate possessor of the oldest known mark issued by a Scottish Office. It is a lead mark, issued by the Friendly Insurance Society of Edinburgh in May, 1767, and shows the policy number 10.

The opportunities for acquiring marks or plates *in situ* are, of course, decreasing steadily. True marks are now a hundred years old

Fire Marks

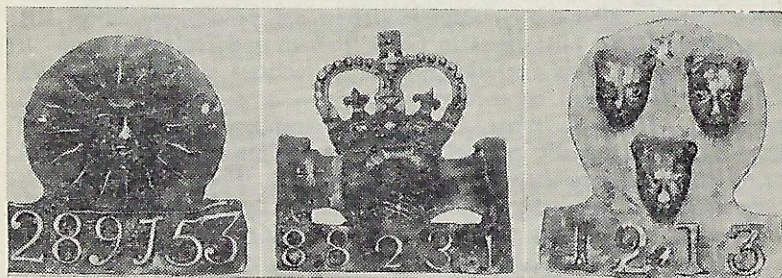
or more, and in addition to the normal reduction in premises of this age there is the deterioration of the plate due to weather and industrial fumes. I was most disappointed quite recently to discover that a very rare tinned iron mark which was found on a building and given to me was so badly rusted that it fell to pieces on being removed.

There are plates to be found in some parts of the country, yet in others there is almost a complete absence—probably the result of energetic collecting in earlier days.

The collector aims, of course, at acquiring the greatest possible number of variants, but is particularly interested in the rarer and older specimens. Some marks are as rare as certain postage stamps and only one or two specimens are known to be in existence. Of the more common of the numbered marks a collector is constantly on the look out for those with smaller, earlier numbers than those he possesses.

Finally, if anyone with a mark he does not treasure would care to take pity on a miserable collector, the Editor has his address !

J. J. J.



SUN

HAND-IN-HAND

SALOP

Our Man-Power Problem—Post War

By R. G. C.

I THINK we all realize that whatever is to be the future of our Service, the problems to be settled are numerous and complex. I wonder, however, if any considerable thought has been given to the "age" problem.

Before the war the average age of the professional fireman throughout the country was probably not more than 28 years—I am inclined to the view that it was less—whilst the average age of professional officers of all grades was approximately 42.

To-day, due to reasons of which we are all aware (and have in some cases protested in vain), the average age of the whole-time fireman has risen to 40 years, whilst that of the officers has probably dropped to 40 years or even less.

In my opinion an ideal pump crew should comprise persons of the following age groups :—2 between 20 and 25 ; 2 between 25 and 35 ; and 1 between 35 and 50. To-day the average pump crew would comprise age groups as follows :—3 between 38 and 42 ; 2 between 42 and 50.

I consider the severest critic would agree with me that 40 is a little advanced for a man to carry out the *full* duties of a fireman, and that by the time firemen in peace time have reached this age, they have the right to expect to be allocated the lighter duties of the fireman's daily task—even on the fireground.

At the present time, Fire Forces are preparing lists (if they have not already done so) of persons to be retained (for the moment ?) in the Service. In general these persons are being selected for their general ability, enthusiasm, willingness, etc. ; any question of age consideration is somewhat cramped by the conditions of release from the Service set out in N.F.S.I. 66/1944. The weak and often criticized system of Medical Examination we have in the Service is responsible for the retention in the Service of men who, in the opinion of their officers, are not fit for full operational duties—yet due to the requirements of the N.F.S.I. referred to it is not possible to include *all* such persons on "redundant lists."

To a lesser extent the foregoing remarks apply to officers—by lesser extent I mean that the average age of officers can (but not necessarily should) be higher than that of firemen. Provided a good officer is reasonably fit and can stay the course of violent physical effort for short periods, he would be satisfactory to the Service. It is, of course, ideal if officers can possess both physical and mental attributes

Our Man-Power Problem—Post War

of high degree. To be able to undertake all that your men can undertake in addition to doing your own job as a first-class officer is an incalculable asset.

What does this all mean?

It means that with a peacetime Service of 18,000 operational effectives (and I suggest this is not a high figure), we shall have—unless we start recruiting immediately—an operational complement whose average age in 5 years' time will be in the 50's, which is 20 years too high.

It means, even if we start recruiting immediately in sufficient numbers, that the Service will have to carry an excess establishment for something like 15 years, raising our required operational strength to 24,000. The alternative is to say, in 12 months' time, to the non-professional men we are retaining, "we no longer require you," and this is surely against the accepted principles of post-war demobilization.

There is, of course, from the Service angle, no reason why we should not carry an excess establishment. In fact, I think officers would probably welcome such a possibility—but will the authorities who are to pay for a post-war Service allow this? If not, what is their answer to this problem to ensure:—(1) A reasonably young Fire Service immediately after the War, (2) Fair treatment to the men and officers who are non-professional, and who are being retained at the moment?

A strong and energetic line on this problem will produce a satisfactory answer to these points, and in addition bring into the Service the new blood so desperately required to-day and provide the officers of the future (for where are the latter to be found in great numbers in our Service to-day?). It will give the College and Training Schools something to get their teeth into, and finally provide the opportunity to start a system of apprenticeship with all its advantages for future years. I say, therefore, start recruiting—NOW.

History of the Fire Service

MAN'S destruction was first threatened by the deluge and ever since it has been threatened by fire. In all ages man has recognized fire as one of his potent enemies. He has been amazed at its ravages and terrified by its fierceness. In the Dark Ages the awfulness of fire and the fear aroused was often declared by Sacerdotalists to be the expression of the majesty and power of deities, and this is so even to-day in some of the less frequented parts of the world. At all times the god of fire has been depicted as fierce and unmerciful. Even to-day, after centuries of social and educational development, when man can pride himself on his all-conquering progress in harnessing the forces of nature, when the great victories of science during the last centuries stand out as a pinnacle of intellectual achievement, fire reigns with undisputed sway as the greatest destructive agent in the world, against whose strongholds comparatively little headway would appear to have been made.



The destructive power of fire is appalling. The yearly loss by fire in the United Kingdom runs into millions of pounds sterling. When one hears of certain articles costing a given amount one must appreciate that the whole of this amount is not a dead loss, but is, in fact, the result of expenditure on labour; whereas, in the case of fire, there can be no question but that it is an absolute loss. Destruction by fire is a dead loss to mankind, even supposing, as is the case in the majority of instances to-day, the individual sufferer is financially safeguarded by insurance. Monetary compensation can never replace that which is destroyed by fire. Wealth becomes void under its devouring influence. The work of centuries is soon reduced to little more than a memory; beautiful buildings, works of art, records and ancient libraries, all of which would have been a mine of information to the student, are for ever sunk in oblivion and lost by the action of fire. Every year disastrous forest fires occur, whole cities and ships with their valuable cargoes of merchandize are destroyed and a toll of human life is gathered. It has been said that perhaps the social reformer, eager to find money for his reforms, might well turn his eyes to the millions of the country's wealth that are every year vanishing in smoke and flames.

It is true that the subject of combating fires has, during the last

fifty years, received more attention in this country than ever before, but we are still a long way from perfection. With all the losses which have occurred (and they must total an enormous amount during this last generation), it was only a little over 75 years ago that the duty of extinguishing fires in a big city like London was taken over by public authority from the hands of private enterprise. Fire Brigades have existed in one shape or another for centuries. In early history and Roman times they were co-existent with military government. An interesting account of a Roman Fire Brigade appears in Volume 18 of the records of the Royal Archaeological Society.

Couvre-Feu or CURFEW

The custom in England of covering up all fires at a fixed time in the evening may date back to King Alfred's reign. The mode of heating buildings at that time was by a wood or peat fire upon the hearth in the middle of a room. These holes, filled in with louvers, can still be seen in the roofs of ancient halls and kitchens throughout the country. The floors were covered with rushes upon which many of the inmates slept. Therefore, the proper covering of the fire was a very necessary precaution against embers being blown about amongst the combustible material in the building. William the Conqueror found it a useful regulation, and ordained that it should be rigidly carried out upon the ringing of a bell. Offenders were subjected to a severe penalty. The covering up of the fire was called by the Normans "*Couvre-feu*", which afterwards became "*Curfew*", and in course of time the ringing of the bell itself was given that name. The cover, at first, may have been similar to a present day dish cover, but after the introduction of the chimney the fires would be on the hearths under the flues, and naturally the best method of covering the embers would be to rake them as close to the back of the hearth as possible and place the curfew in front.

Rochester Castle, built in 1130, had complete fire places with semi-circular backs and an arch over. The flues, however, go only a few feet up into the thickness of the wall and are turned out at the back through small holes. A few years later the improvement of carrying the flues up through the height of the whole wall appears.

The time of ringing the curfew bell seems to have been 8 o'clock in the evening, but in many places the time of tolling was 7, and it was gradually advanced to 8, and in some places 9. The absolute prohibition of lights after the ringing of the curfew bell was abolished by Henry I in 1100.

When the Romans left our shores in A.D. 410, there was no power in the land strong enough to give directions to the people's energies, and through the succeeding centuries very little improvement took place in the fight against fire. The dormant state of the local government in England gave no opportunity for the establishment of any department until the reign of Elizabeth, and it is notorious that up to the time of the Great Fire of London in 1666 squirts, or siphos, similar in design to those left by the Romans, were still in use.

During the years prior to 1666 the regulations required that a barrel of water for quenching fires should be placed before the doors of a building and that the bellman should ring his bell at night and call out "Take care of your fire and candle, be charitable to the poor and pray for the dead."

Following the Great Fire of London various ideas and schemes were put forward, especially by the citizens of London, but it is strange that the proposals were directed more towards recuperating themselves for losses than in any direct action for combating and extinguishing fire. It seemed better to have strong Insurance Companies than strong Fire Brigades, and the first Insurance Companies made their appearance in 1684. Many more came into being in the next 50 years, but Fire Brigades were almost non-existent.

PROGRESS ON THE CONTINENT

Whilst in this country Insurance Companies were everywhere springing into existence, the free cities on the Continent, benefiting no doubt by a translation of the works of Hero of Alexandria published in 1583, forthwith expanded and formed Fire Brigades to defend their property. This movement was materially assisted by the advanced state of their communal government and by the public spirit of the inhabitants in encouraging inventions. The advance was indeed enormous, for during the previous 1700 years practically nothing had been done, and these inventions prepared the way for the advent of the modern Fire Brigade.

An excuse might possibly be entered here for the backwardness of English affairs. Social England was not ready for such things. The Church had long been the only educational institution in the country, and it was a power in the land not to be forgotten—jealous of its position and not likely to receive very kindly any suggestion for the diminution of her power and prestige. Then the Reformation came and with it the enormous extension of English trade and influence. The echo of the Reformation had hardly died away, however, when the struggle commenced between the King and his Parliament, and so more unrest. Even for one hundred years succeeding the advent of Fire Brigades on the Continent, the local government of this country was unripe for their introduction. The parochial system favoured too much of ecclesiastical control, and the larger centres were too much concerned with the affairs of Court and Parliament to introduce measures for the benefit of their communal existence. Early records mention several disastrous fires in the City of London, the extent of which was largely due to the inflammable nature of the materials of which houses were constructed. In 1189 the first Mayor of London promulgated an assize of buildings to encourage the use of stone instead of wood, particularly for party walls. This was supplemented in 1212 by a second assize which required new houses to be roofed with tiles, shingles, boards or lead, instead of reeds and rushes, as formerly. This measure also decreed that each Alderman should keep a crook and cord and recommended that a vessel full of water should be kept before every door.

For four centuries the modest requirements of this decree did not appear appreciably to have extended. The first real efforts towards an organized system of fire precaution in London were a direct consequence of the Great Fire. It is said that James II, on viewing the destruction, said "this must not occur again." To attack this disastrous fire, buckets, hand-squirts and a few rudimentary pumps were the only appliances available. Water was scarce, and the pipes of the new River Company, then only recently laid, were found to be dry. The only method of attack which proved of value was a negative one and consisted of blowing up buildings to form gaps too wide for the flames to cross.

LONDON'S FIRST DISTRICT BRIGADES

In 1668 the city was divided into four districts, each of which was to provide 800 Leather Buckets, 50 Ladders, 24 Pickaxes and 40 Shovels. Each of the twelve principle City Companies was to provide 30 Buckets, 1 Engine, 6 Pickaxes, 3 Ladders and 2 Hand-squirts. *(These squirts were similar in construction to our present-day garden syringe, with the exception that they provided a jet and not a spray. Some of them were of sufficient size to warrant the attendance of three men to manipulate them. They might well be said to be the father of our present Stirrup Hand-Pump. It is also curious to note that this type of appliance was in use in ancient China, the apparatus then being made entirely of wood).* Little is known of the engine referred to above, but it may have been a hand-squirt mounted on a cistern, or some sort of portable pump. To man these appliances it was laid down that the men should be supplied from the several companies of Carpenters, Bricklayers, Plasterers, Painters, Masons, Smiths, Plumbers and Paviers, thus proving that the fireman was ever a handyman. Interest in this soon died, and during the next 150 years the effort was supported by a few men with manual engines, which were allowed by the parochial authorities to fall into a chronic state of inefficiency. Of course, it must not be overlooked that communications were very difficult and education generally was of a low order, especially on the mechanical and scientific side.

The precise date when Fire Insurance Companies commenced formation of their own independent practice is doubtful. Some believe that an organization was in existence in about 1684, but it is not certain. Various old engravings and prints show engines and appliances, but only in a few cases can dates be discovered, nor can it be ascertained with certainty how many of these Insurance Companies had Brigades. It is known that many of them maintained these bodies at their own expense in many of the large towns, and that according to the office in which a building was insured it was the duty of the Company's brigade to extinguish any fire which might occur in that building. This accounts for those mysterious plates called fire marks often seen affixed to the walls of old buildings. *(See article on page 20).* It was at this stage, however, that one saw the curious condition of a Brigade arriving at a fire, finding that it was not their job and returning

home, leaving the building to burn. Thus the advantages of these institutions, though undoubtedly supplying a real want, were, if anything, designed to be more beneficial to the shareholders than to the public. The peculiar constitution of these Brigades fostered competition, and this became the mainspring to efficiency. Rivalry acted as a stimulant to work and was as much a public advertisement for the Companies as it was a safeguard to the interest and property of the people.

One of the early Insurance prospectuses states that watermen and other labourers are to be employed at the charge of the underwriters to assist at quenching fires. The Offices dressed their men in livery and gave them badges which were worn on the arms.

THE FIRST MUNICIPAL BRIGADE

Edinburgh was the first city in the country to possess a whole-time Fire Brigade, followed by Manchester and Glasgow. From then onwards Brigades began to spring into existence. A local Act in Liverpool in 1842 made Insurance Companies liable. Manchester obtained a special local Act in 1844, called the Manchester Police Regulation Act, which enabled the Corporation to maintain the staff of the Fire Brigade out of the police rate. London, however, still favoured her private concern and made no apparent effort to change until 1866, two hundred years after the Great Fire.

1871, Capt. Shaw took a party of London firemen to Paris to quell the fire caused by the Civil War.

A year after the formation of the London Fire Engine Establishment, *viz.*, in 1833, a general Act was passed which enabled parishes and vestries wishing to do so to provide and keep up Fire Engines. Certain parishes in what is now the County of London availed themselves of this offer. This Act, however, was not much better for efficiency than the one of 1774, and was almost as useless from the point of view of the development of the Fire Service.

Fire Services in the United Kingdom proceeded very slowly, but in 1865 a rapid progress commenced, both in the design of fire appliances and their use. In 1893 the first sliding escape was introduced, followed four years later by a horsed escape of a new pattern in which the escape could be slipped whilst travelling. The first motor escapes came into being about 1906, but the escapes themselves, apart from one or two slight changes and improvements, were of the same type as are used to-day.

" STEAMERS "

The first Steam Fire Engine constructed in England was built in 1829, and in 1855 the first floating Steam Engine was put in commission. Thus we have progressed, until we are now at a new era where improvements are occurring daily.

Noli Timere Ignem—Extingue (Fear not fire—Fight it)
and are commencing the season West
as.

SPORTING Chatter

By "OLD GUARD"

Wales Leads the Field

I make no apology for devoting more space than usual to Rugby Football, in which at the moment gallant little Wales easily leads the field. Fresh from their success against London Fire Forces in December, No. 21 Area had no doubts about the return match at Swansea and the score of 11 points to nil in their favour by no means flattered them. The Welshmen seemed to get inspiration from the famous St. Helens ground, were much faster than the Londoners and owed their success largely to the fact that they snapped up the opportunities which came their way. A typical Welsh welcome was given to the London party in much-blitzed Swansea and included a civic reception by the Mayor. Judging from reports, the Saxons carried away with them, not only a much more favourable impression of their "historic enemies," but also one of the proverbial mascots (a saucepan), which the Welshmen always fasten to one of the goal posts. This mascot painted in vivid red now holds pride of place at a London station, and it would not surprise me to hear that the famous Welsh ditty—"Sausepan fach"—has been added to the Londoners' musical repertoire.

London's "Bogey"

Not satisfied with taking London's scalp, the Welshmen proceeded to polish off Bristol (No. 17 Area) on the latter's ground by 29 points to 3, and by the time these notes are in print the return game at Swansea will have been played. It was the amazing speed of the Welsh "threes" and the dash of the pack which unsettled the Bristolians,

whose line was crossed nine times. Fortunately for them all the attempts at conversion, except one, failed, otherwise the score would have been much heavier. Both teams had to make changes through injuries. However, playing at home to London a week later, Bristol won by 11 points to nil. The West Country men have always been London's "bogey" because in the last two seasons Bristol have won all the games, except one, which ended in a draw. Unfortunately, one of the London players broke a leg in this match, and there is no doubt that the accident affected the team.

Service International

Strange as it may seem, only London, Bristol and Wales participate in Inter-Regional Rugby. With the idea of creating a greater interest in the game, the N.F.S. Sports Council, at its last meeting, unanimously adopted a proposal, emanating from Wales, for a Service International between the two countries. Lt. Cmdr. K. N. Hoare R.N. (Rtd.), the Chairman of the Council and himself a keen rugger enthusiast considered the idea a sound one and arrangements are now proceeding to stage the game at Stradey Park, the peace-time home of the Llanelly club. England should be able to field a powerful side, and there is nothing more certain that there will be keen competition to get into the Welsh team. The date fixed is Saturday, 14th April, and I understand that there is a keen demand for tickets in the Welsh tinplate town and surrounding valleys, where they will politely tell you that they teach them rugby almost before they have "left the cradle."

Only One Representative

With the rugby talent at present to be found in the National Fire Service, it passes one's comprehension why, in the last match between the Civil Defence and the R.A.F., the Service had only one representative. I am told that, although the N.F.S. Sports Council has a representative on the Civil Defence Selection Committee, he was not even invited to the meeting which selected the side for this very important game. What the explanation is, I am not even in a position to hazard a guess, but I am not surprised to learn that the Sports Council are not going to take the matter lying down and representations have no doubt by now been made to the proper quarter. Equally as discourteous is the fact that no official application for permission for this one player to take part was made to the Senior Officer of the Area to which he is attached.

Battle of the Roses

There was a "battle of the roses" flavour about the No. 2 and No. 10 Inter-Regional League soccer match on Rotherham United's ground. A crowd of nearly two thousand saw No. 2 surprisingly trounce the League cup holders by 7 goals to nil and there was no fluke about their success. The Yorkshiremen started sensationally, Jordan (Doncaster Rovers) securing a brilliant "hat trick" within 15 minutes from the start and Watmough (York), increasing the lead later. Crossing over with a 4-goal deficit, No. 10 fought back stubbornly, but No. 2 were not to be thwarted and increased their score from a penalty taken by Mills (Rotherham) and two clever goals by Watmough.

The Finalists

The Inter-League Competition sponsored by the N.F.S. Sports Council has if anything excited more interest this season than last. As a result of their brilliant win No. 2 will now represent the North against No. 5, champions of the South, for the League Cup to be played at Everton. A goal to nil win over No. 12 in an exciting game enabled No.

Sporting Chatter

5 to finish their programme with maximum points—a fine achievement. Another interesting game in the competition was that between No. 4 and No. 8 at St. Albans, the Welsh side securing their first win in the competition by 4 goals to 2.

Inter-Area Hockey

Two Inter-Area fixtures have been completed between mixed elevens chosen from No. 17 and No. 20 where this branch of sport has an enthusiastic, if small, following. The first match was played at Bristol in February, an exceedingly exciting match ending in a draw 4-4. Apart from a number of shattered sticks and sundry bruises, no bones were broken, which was remarkable considering the keen play. The well-known Somerset and England cricketer, Harold Gimblett, contributed to the score of the No. 17 Area side. The return fixture, played at Cardiff on 17th March, was patronized by the presence of Fire Force Commander Strange and Assistant Fire Force Commander Thomas—the latter hailing from Bristol Police Brigade. No. 20 were defeated by 3 goals to one in a robust game which was unfortunately marred by a number of injuries. The visitors' captain, Iles, sustained slight concussion towards the end of the game, together with a female member of the home side. Typical Welsh hospitality is a mild description of the way in which No. 20 entertained their opponents at Fire Force Headquarters. Every effort was made to extend a warm welcome to the visitors, who went away full of praise for their neighbours across the Severn.

A Challenge

Incidentally, the No. 17 Area team has been built up through the untiring enthusiasm of the Firewoman captain of the Bristol Sub Area "A" team, who has put N.F.S. hockey on the map with regular fixtures against Navy, Army and Air Force elevens. I hear that No. 17 have thrown out a challenge to No. 18 Area and are confident that they will finish the season West Country champions.

A Post-War Mobilizing Scheme

THE future of the National Fire Service remains, at the moment, a mystery, but it seems obvious that even in the event of the Service returning in its entirety to the local authorities, some form of control will still be operated, and the days when it was possible to refuse to attend a fire in the area of another local authority will be ended.

The pros and cons of a return to local authority control are being keenly and even heatedly discussed, and it seems opportune that a survey of a possible system of control for the post-war years should be made by an officer whose future career will be outside the Service and who therefore has "no axe to grind" in favour of either party.

Station to Station Link-up

The first essential of all fire control is the completion of the first attendance at the earliest possible moment. In most cases outside the largest towns and cities the first attendance to any fire is likely to be completed from a single station, but where it is necessary for appliances to be drawn from a second station, I think that there can be no doubt that it should be done by direct contact from one station to another. Since such contact is likely to be needed only in the more densely-populated districts, where stations are reasonably close to one another, private wires appear to offer a reasonable link-up.

The next most important duty of the system of control will be the provision at a fire of any necessary reinforcements in the quickest possible time. The question now arises as to whether this assistance shall be obtained (a) by direct contact from the fireground to other stations, (b) by message from the fireground to the home station which in turn would contact other stations and, having exhausted these reserves, call upon a senior control, (c) by direct contact from the fireground to a higher control which should be in possession of the disposition of appliances over a fairly wide area.

In each of the methods set out above it is assumed, of course, that the home station would be unable to supply the appliances required. Method (a) might be effective in rural areas where more than three appliances would rarely be required, but in urban areas, where a considerable number of appliances are likely to be needed, it would place too much strain on the officer-in-charge. The home station could certainly undertake the work of contacting neighbouring stations, as indicated in method (b), and could do so very efficiently provided that it always had a picture of the availability at all surrounding stations and that no more than, say, five pumps were required. Where more appliances were needed it would almost certainly be necessary for part of the request to be passed to a senior control, which would have a picture of the disposition over a much wider area. Direct contact between the fireground and a senior control, method (c), would

A Post-War Mobilizing Scheme

in most areas be difficult owing to the necessity for making trunk calls, and it is doubtful if even the use of the "Urgent Fire Call" facility would give this system sufficient speed in operation. There are, of course, other possible combinations of methods but I have picked out the three which I consider to offer the best prospects of efficiency; of the three, I think there can be no doubt that method (b) would give the best possible results over the whole country.

Assistance above Station Level

The territory to be governed by a senior control may possibly need to be varied in different parts of the country, but it would appear that the existing Fire Force Controls would in most cases effectively cope with the balance of appliances required to complete any assistance message after a station had ordered on everything recorded as available in its immediate neighbourhood. In certain Areas it may be considered that existing Divisional Controls could undertake this work more efficiently but, all too frequently, Divisional boundaries bisect large towns or important industrial areas. If Fire Force is not accepted as the senior level, it will almost certainly be necessary to revise the boundaries of most Divisions to suit local conditions rather than to fit local authority boundaries. Communications in the bigger Areas may be considered to be too extended, but this difficulty could usually be avoided by carefully siting the senior control and by the use in emergencies of the "Urgent Fire Call" facilities.

Although this priority service of the G.P.O. telephone system would not be adequate for messages from the fireground, as method (c) when all reinforcements had to be ordered by the senior control, it would undoubtedly be sufficiently rapid for dealing with the secondary reinforcements required after the home station had exhausted the immediate neighbourhood. Post-war economies will certainly necessitate very careful pruning of controls and their staffs and, although communications on a Regional basis would certainly be too extended, I believe that a system of senior controls based on the existing Fire Forces would be most effective.

Every Station ought to have a map of the station ground on at least a one-inch scale, larger of course in built-up areas, and this map would form the basis of the mobilizing system. On it would be shown the location of the home station, the location of all others whose grounds abutted and the position of any station which could give a quicker attendance than those adjoining. The availability of officers and appliances at the home station and each neighbouring station would be shown on the map by pins with heads of different shapes and colours, sockets being provided at the site of each station to take the pins and protect the map. Pins not in use could be stored in racks at the foot of the map. A similar system of recording availability within a Fire Force would be used at the senior control, and the Force Control map would show in addition to its own stations the availability of every station whose ground adjoined the Fire Force boundary.

A Post-War Mobilizing Scheme

Reporting Availability

At the commencement of each duty period a station would report its availability to every other station on whose map it appeared and also to the senior control. In return it would receive a report on the availability at stations appearing on its map. Any changes in availability during the day would be reported to all concerned. Stations on the border of two Areas would report to the Fire Force over the border only at the beginning of duty period.

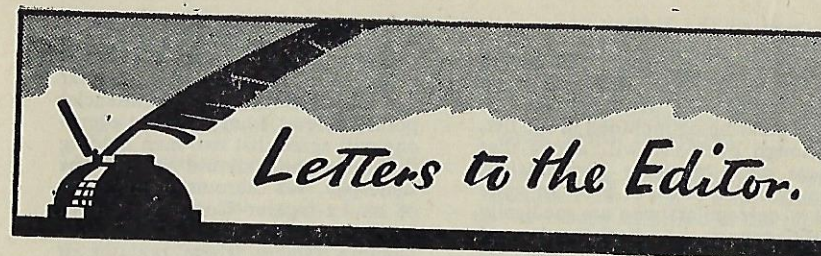
When a fire call was received at a station, appliances would be turned out. If assistance was required to complete the first attendance, this would be ordered direct from the neighbouring station able to give the quickest attendance. All other stations shown on the map would be informed of the call, whether or not assistance was required, in order to keep them informed regarding availability at the home station. The senior control would be informed for the same purpose and also in order that any necessary covering moves might be made. Pins on the mobilizing map would, of course, be moved to keep pace with the situation and serve to indicate the location of the fire.

Should an assistance message be received, as many appliances as possible would be drawn from the stations shown on the map of the home station. In certain cases it would be inadvisable for the whole of the appliances to be withdrawn from a station for reinforcing purposes, and such machines would be represented on the map by special pins to indicate that they could not be requested. It is, however, suggested that all appliances should be available for use elsewhere on receipt of instructions from the senior control. The balance of appliances, if any, would be requested from the senior control, which would, in any case, be informed of the receipt of the assistance message and the action taken.

A Small Control Staff

The work of the senior control, it will be noted, is confined entirely to providing secondary reinforcements and covering up any district in which the fire situation appears to call for moves in anticipation of a growing fire situation. It might also be concerned with the provision of senior officers, such as may still exist, for fires which are worthy of their attendance. A very small staff would be required, and should certainly not be too extravagant an organization even for post-war purposes.

In due course, no doubt, direct radio communication might be provided between stations and their senior control, and even between the fireground and the senior control. When this becomes possible, mobilizing will have reached the acme of efficiency, and one of the worries of the junior officers—"Are those pumps never coming?" will have vanished for ever. The time may even come when a junior will be acutely conscious that he is being watched by his senior, who is comfortably seated behind a television set some fifty miles away!



Dear Mr. Editor,

CHAIN OF CONTROL

In the days of an expanding Service and the strong possibility of large-scale enemy action, the "Chain of Control" was the life line of the Service from an operational point of view, in that all information was concentrated into one focal point—the Fire Control at the Home Office. The reason for its introduction has now materially disappeared, but it still remains in its original state, with a few minor modifications, to strangle a very much reduced Service.

Whilst I agree that Area, Region and Home Office should be kept informed of Enemy Action fires, I cannot see why all Lull-Period fires of less than 5 pumps need be reported beyond Area, or even Sub-Area level. False Alarms, Chimney Fires, etc., are reported right through, via Sub-Area and Area to Region, and Region then supply Home Office daily with a summary of fires that have occurred, classified as small, medium and large. Why this is necessary I cannot imagine, because the whole system and "Chain of Control" was introduced so that the resources of the country could be deployed to meet the attack of the enemy and not to provide higher levels of control with the details of multitudinous, but small, calls on the Fire Service during Lull Periods.

Under present conditions I feel that a weekly board check to Region and Home Office is all that is necessary to keep them informed of the general condition throughout the country in the event of enemy air attacks recurring.

Nationalization appears to have spoilt some of the ex-regular Officers, who seem to me more

concerned with making certain that the appropriate messages are sent to the controls rather than the essential job of putting out the fire. I feel this would be obviated if this information did not have to go to such a high level.

The "Chain of Control" is also strangling the Service in other ways, as under existing instructions a Company Officer in charge of a station is bound hand and foot and cannot make decisions without reference to Column or Divisional Officers. In many cases the Divisional Officer is restricted to a ridiculous extent, and matters which he should be able to deal with have to be referred to Fire Force level. Prior to Nationalization the Chief Officer receiving the salary of a Company, Column or Divisional Officer had much more responsibility and freedom of action than Officers have under the present system. The system that has been introduced with the N.F.S. has, to a large extent, outlived its usefulness and if the risk of enemy action continues to be small, I feel that much more responsibility and freedom of action should be given to those holding Officer rank at Divisional and Station level.

"ONLOOKER"

Dear Sir,

EX-REGULAR A.F.S. OFFICERS

Taken as a class the ex-regular firemen have been the most privileged and pampered of all British subjects, with the possible exception of Civil Servants.

As they were needed to form the core of our expanded Service, they were reserved at 18, and therefore only a small percentage have changed their occupations since the outbreak of War.

Letters to the Editor

Although thousands of officers and men are being released from the Service, one never hears of an ex-regular being included in the list, although everyone will admit that there must be some less efficient than the best of the A.F.S. In some cases ex-regulars who are medically unfit cannot be discharged, and accordingly, A.I. A.F.S. men receive the "chopper."

When the N.F.S. was formed in August, 1941, the Government promised that no one would suffer financially. If the Government look after the whole population as they have the ex-regulars, what a state of Utopia we shall have!

Conditions of service and pay varied considerably throughout the country. Some received rent allowances, others were provided with houses. Therefore, some paid income tax on the money received as rent allowance, the others with free houses were more fortunate and did not. Boot allowances, car allowances, mileage allowances, free fuel, free light, free medical treatment, free dental and hospital treatment, and last, but not least, a pension scheme, were some of the privileges enjoyed in full or in part by ex-regulars.

When the N.F.S. was formed, the percentage of ex-regulars to A.F.S. was so small that it was inevitable that all ex-regulars who were possessed of normal intelligence would become Officers or, at the worst, Section Leaders.

I do not know whether my figures are correct, but I should say that on the operational side, 90% of Column Officer rank and above is filled by ex-regulars, and in a number of cases, ably filled, as these were the men who had had experience at fires. Unfortunately, however, only a very small percentage had ever controlled more than a handful of men, and could not adapt themselves to officer rank in an expanded Service with great increase in the number of personnel. Also, the main bulk of these men were not administratively minded or business men, and those who are in the Service know the result.

My main point, however, is in the different treatment of an ex-regular and an A.F.S. man from a financial point of view. I am sure that everyone will agree that two men holding the same rank should receive the same pay, yet there are some cases of an ex-regular Company Officer being "better off" than an A.F.S. Column Officer (there *are* one or two), all because of emoluments.

Let us take a case—an ex-regular who was a fireman before N.F.S. receiving £4 10s. od. per week, plus rent allowances of 16/-, plus free medical, hospital and dental treatment. He was also in the pension scheme and a small amount was deducted from his £4 10s. od each week to cover this. The Government said he would not be worse off through the N.F.S. To-day he is a Company Officer with £400 per year (and this is the galling part to his A.F.S. colleague) *plus* his 16/- rent allowance and pension, etc., etc. If there had not been a war he would probably be receiving £4 10s. plus. My own opinion is that to implement the promise of the Government, all ex-regular's salaries, plus emoluments, should be assessed pre-N.F.S., taking into account all emoluments. In the above case it would be about £6 per week (maximum) and once that figure was reached in normal salary, all emoluments should be forgotten. The pension rights should be maintained as this is essential to a fireman's career.

In conclusion, I must agree that most A.F.S. men have had a very comfortable existence compared with the men of the fighting services. They have, however, had to change their occupation through the war, and in most cases to the detriment of their career or business. Many of them, also, have no guarantee that they will be able to return to their peace-time occupations whilst, as I think all will agree, the careers of ex-regulars have been very considerably enhanced by the war.

What do you think?

"Not an ex-regular"

* * * *

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Editor,

HISTORIES OF PRINCIPAL BRIGADES

I read with interest your article on the Edinburgh Fire Brigade. References to the great fire in November, 1824, reminded me of the efforts of one Pliny, born in the year A.D. 62 during the reign of the Emperor Nero. He made an unsuccessful attempt to form a Fire Brigade, and whilst Governor of Bithynia wrote the following letter to his Emperor (Trajan):

"While I was making a progress in a different part of the province a prodigious fire broke out at Nicomedia, which not only consumed several private houses, but also two public buildings; the town-house and the temple of Isis, though they stood on contrary sides of the street. The occasion of its spreading thus far was partly owing to the violence of the wind, and partly to the indolence of the people, who, I am well assured, stood fixed and idle spectators of this terrible calamity. The truth is, the city was not provided either with engines, buckets, or any one single instrument proper to extinguish fires; which I have now, however, given directions to have prepared. You will consider, Sir, whether it may not be advisable to institute a company of firemen, consisting only of one hundred and fifty members. I will take care none but those of that business shall be admitted into it; and that the privileges granted them shall not be extended to any other purpose."

As this incorporated body will consist of so small a number, it will be easy enough to keep them under proper regulation."

Considering that Bithynia was "occupied territory", Pliny could not have been surprised at the reply he received, but unquestionably he must have been disappointed when he read this dispatch from his Emperor:

"You are of the opinion that it would be proper to constitute a company of firemen in Nicomedia agreeably to what has been practised in several other cities. But it is to be remembered that these sort of societies have greatly disturbed the peace of that province in general and of those cities in particular. Whatever name we give them, and for whatever purposes they may be founded, they will not fail to form themselves into assemblies, however short their meetings may be. It will, therefore, be safer to provide such machines as are of service in extinguishing fires, enjoining the owners of houses to assist upon such occasions, and if it shall be necessary to call in the help of the populace."

It is interesting to compare the contents of this Roman correspondence with the terms of the letters which now pass between various levels in the administrative hierarchy of the modern Service. It seems that even if Edinburgh is "The First Municipal Fire Service in the World", a Roman made a good attempt at setting up a Brigade more than 1800 years ago.—"J.D."

THE FUTURE POLICY OF THE FIRE SERVICE

By an OPERATIONAL
STAFF OFFICER

THE future policy of the British Fire Service is, without doubt, the most controversial Service topic of the day. Before appending my views on this interesting subject, I would like to make it quite clear to my readers that I am not one of those people who stands to gain from the continuance of the National Fire Service and that prior to Nationalization, I held a Fire Service appointment which was certainly equal, if not more favourable, than my present National Fire Service rank. Having made this point quite clear, I will endeavour to express my views in a perfectly straight-forward manner.

For many years prior to Nationalization of the Service, it was quite common to read that one or other of the far too many Fire Service Associations had at some Annual or General Meeting, tabled a motion to the effect that they were of the opinion that the country's fire defences should be placed under the direct control of the State, and that the Fire Service was the 'Cinderella' of the local authority organizations. Associations who are now opposing Nationalization were clamouring for State Control. I feel sure that any Fire Service Officer who is honest with himself will admit that he hailed the appointed day (18th August, 1941) as an event eagerly awaited and long overdue.

The fact that a National Fire Service whose policy is determined by a Chief of Staff, assisted by a board of experienced executive Fire Officers, is the soundest and wisest policy of fire defence for the whole community is logic from which any sane person cannot escape and the progressive Fire Officer cannot deny. Is it not deplorable then to read such cheap wit and destructive criticism, which appears from time to time in certain journals and periodical publications which have, I venture to suggest, been written or promoted by persons with self-centred interests?

The Fire Services of the country were Nationalized at a time when emergency measures and requirements had by necessity to predominate peace-time fire-fighting technique, and whilst I agree that there is still much to be desired from a full-period efficiency point of view, none can deny that the National Fire Service did not fail in its efforts to cope with the enemy attempts to destroy our cities by fire.

I often wonder if some of the critics pause to realize the vast amount of administrative work which was necessary to change horses in mid-stream—or do they suggest that such a herculean task could be carried out without mistakes? I cannot quite understand why they did not come forward with some of the brilliant ideas and suggestions which are now being put forward for the Post-War Fire Service.

I am afraid that far too many of us have self-centred interests and I have no doubt that if a census was taken, it would reveal that most Officers holding four-figure salaries favour Nationalization, while the smaller fry oppose it—Why? I leave you to answer that question yourselves.

The Future Policy of the Fire Service

It is true that there has been, and still are, many misfits in the Service and that some very efficient Officers have had a very raw deal. But this fact in itself is not sufficient cause or good reason to condemn the State Control of the Service.

Efficient fire protection of life and property is a necessity which should be afforded to all, and the cost of that necessity should be borne wholly and solely by Exchequer funds. I would quote the case of private enterprise—capital is necessary for progress and expansion, provided the expenditure of that capital is controlled by a competent Board of Directors. Let us face facts and admit that State control of the fire defences of the country is the most efficient form of fire protection.

Nobody would suggest that a war could be won with 1,400 independent controlling bodies, however efficient the administration of those bodies may be, and such a policy is bound to produce chaotic conditions in the Fire Service.

I give below a few suggestions which I consider are practicable and with which I have no doubt progressive Fire Officers will agree.

- (a) The establishment of a State-Controlled Fire Service, headed by a Chief of Fire Staff and assisted by a Board of experienced Executive Fire Officers, who will advise and have direct access to the Home Secretary.
- (b) On the cessation of hostilities, the termination of all N.F.S. appointments, which it is pointed out are temporary and have been made for the period of the present emergency. All Officers to be boarded for post-war appointments which will be made on the recommendation of a board of experienced Executive Fire Officers, due regard being given to the candidates' experience, qualifications and Service.
- (c) The appointment of Principal Fire Officers in each Fire Area who have a specialized knowledge of the risks associated with their commands. Such Officers to be co-opted to serve on the executive board and advise as to the particular requirements for fire prevention, protection and extinction within their commands.
- (d) The retention of the part-time members of the Service on similar lines to that of the Territorial Army and the establishment of an efficient part-time retained organization in those parts of the country that do not justify a whole-time establishment.
- (e) The appointment of a staff of Fire and Technical Engineers who, in consultation with the Executive Board of Officers, would advise as to the type of appliances most suited to the various requirements of the Service.
- (f) The standardization of pay, pension and emoluments for all ranks, with promotion by examination after a man has completed a stipulated minimum period on operational duties.
- (g) All administrative posts to be civilian appointments, not holding N.F.S. rank, and subordinate to the Chief of Fire Staff.

How Assam became Fire-minded

N.F.S. OFFICER CONSIDERS NATIVES ARE KEEN

EARLY in 1942, as the Japanese armies drew nearer in the East and the German armies were pressing through the Caucasus in the West, the possibility and threat of air raids upon India's towns became a reality. A.R.P. measures were to be adopted throughout the country, and some 200 National Fire Service Officers were sent to assist in expanding existing Fire Brigades and in very many cases start entirely new Brigades in small towns where fire protection was previously unheard of.

The officers who were posted to the big cities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras or Delhi had a reasonably straightforward job. The Brigades in these cities were comparable with pre-war Fire Brigades in England and officers were mostly utilized to organize control rooms, perfect mobilizing systems and take charge of new Fire Stations—in short, practically the same duties as at home, with, of course one major difference, native personnel.

I personally was posted to serve with the Assam Government and told to proceed to the capital, Shillong.

Assam is, of course, the border province between India and Burma and is chiefly agricultural, producing rice and tea. Its towns were normally of very little importance, for the Burma border was considered a friendly frontier. As our Army fell back from Burma into Assam these towns assumed a great importance, for they now became important military bases. At this juncture fire protection in most of these towns consisted only of a water tank lorry owned and manned by the Water Department of the municipality. The principle of these tank lorries was sound. They were 500-gall. tank lorries which had a small pump incorporated and 2" delivery hose. In practice, however, these tank lorries were in varying stages of decay and were used daily for supplying water to outlying districts where there was no piped drinking supply. The hose was poor and in no case did I find more than two men, who claimed to be "Firemen", attached to such machines. So, considering the highly combustible nature of buildings, fire protection was nil.

A Sound Idea

This then was the task. To organize an Emergency Fire Service as quickly as possible from literally nothing. The Government in Assam decided that in order to expedite matters the Fire Service would be a new branch of the Police Department so that there would be an administrative background to work on; also, Police parade grounds and instructors could be used. This was really a sound idea and worked well. The various District Superintendents of the Police co-operated in a whole-hearted manner.

Five Fire Officers were allotted to Assam, each being given a district to organize. My particular area was to be the entire Surma Valley, with four main towns of Silchar, Sylhet, Palherkandi and Hinlakandi. Since Silchar was the nearest to the Burma border, I was ordered to make my headquarters there. I was allotted an excellent bungalow for my quarters, and I had been told that pumps and equipment were on the way, but that at first I was not to expect too much. One Sub-Inspector of Police (Indian) was seconded to me to be trained as a Station Officer and he and I went in search of my "Brigade" on my first day. It consisted of a recently-delivered light Coventry Climax Trailer Pump, which looked as though it had seen quite considerable service in the United Kingdom, and seven very mildewed lengths of delivery hose. Hydrants were non-existent, for the town's water mains were 2" and water was turned on only twice a day for an hour or so each time,

How Assam became Fire-minded

The other towns were about 50 miles apart, and when I visited them I found that nothing had arrived in the way of equipment. It had been my plan to requisition buildings for Fire Stations, but the Army authorities seemed to have beaten me to it and all suitable buildings were taken over for troops or stores. To build entirely new places was the only solution. I drew up plans, obtained estimates and approached the Government for funds. After two or three months funds were allotted and I was able to get moving.

Competition Keen

During this period I started recruiting and training on the one solitary pump. The standard for a fireman was to be the same as for a policeman, that is 5 ft. 4 in. in height, 31 in. chest, able to count up to 20, and to pass a doctor's examination. Sanction was given to employ 20 men in the first instance and there was plenty of competition amongst the local young men anxious to enter this new Fire Service. It surprised me that many applicants were not able to fulfil the physical standard. Training was interesting and the men were keen, especially at wet drills.

New vehicles and equipment began to arrive and the semblance of a Fire Service grew. Notable amongst the new deliveries were some American Chrysler Pumps—excellent major pumps direct from America and packed up with every conceivable type of engine spare. But there were no couplings on the suction hose, while the delivery outlets had 2½ inch "V" threads, and the hose instantaneous couplings. Adaptors for the deliveries were soon delivered, but I had to get suction hose couplings manufactured at small workshops in the various towns. This proved a bit of a headache, but eventually couplings were produced.

While all this was going on steady progress was made with the Stations, and by the summer of 1943 I had two Stations complete in each town. Men were housed at each Station and on a continuous duty system.

As soon as the Stations were manned, a very vigorous period of incident training was started, together with further recruiting. Every morning from 6 o'clock to 8 o'clock drills and exercises were the order of the day, and I was very pleased with the way things were shaping.

Calls of Minor Nature

Luckily during this period of organization fire calls had not been many and were only of a minor nature. The first call of any size was to an army kitchen and mess-room. The response and action taken was good and the hours of training proved not to have been wasted. From then onward calls became very frequent in all the towns over the district, each successive call bringing added keenness. The local populace became very fire-minded as soon as they realized what this new Service meant. Previously they had looked on a fire in their towns as something which happened regularly, but which could not be avoided or combatted. Now they called the Fire Service at the slightest provocation.

Every fireman wanted to be a branchman at a fire, and if I happened to be a little late arriving on the scene, then jets were working until I arrived irrespective of water damage.

Water supplies were excellent. Ponds are a feature of this part of the world and they are good static supplies. The residential areas of all the towns were amply covered by these ponds, but I had to construct emergency tanks in the crowded bazaar areas.

The reason for these ponds is interesting. The land is flat, and due to the heavy Monsoon, very liable to flooding. When a house is built it is necessary to build it on a plinth. The earth for this is obtained by digging a hole, generally about 30 feet square and anything from five to ten feet deep. The house is built on the raised plinth and the hole fills with rain water and is used for washing clothes, pots, pans and so on.

Shoes had Never Been Worn

Discipline was very good and the men were very proud of their uniforms. I developed a great admiration for them and their loyalty to me was unquestionable. Many of them had never worn a pair of shoes in their lives,

How Assam became Fire-minded

let alone uniform shirts and shorts, and their first efforts at foot drill in ammunition boots had to be seen to be believed.

It may be interesting to quote the pay of the various grades. This gives an idea of the standard of living there. I quote the pay with the rupee as 1/6 :

Fireman Constable ..	..	£1 19 0	per month
Literate Constable ..	..	£2 2 6	.. "
Drivers ..	..	£3 0 0	.. "
Leading Firemen ..	..	£3 12 0	.. "
Station Officers ..	..	£7 18 0	.. "

This pay did not include rations at first, but things got so bad during the period of the Bengal Famine that the Government issued rations to all Government Servants who received less than 200 rupees per month (£15), so these men were included in the scheme. Even so, the pay was not exactly princely considering many of the men, although only about 25 years of age, had wives and children to keep.

During this period there were many air raid alerts, but fortunately only a small number of actual raids. The Japanese method of bombing seemed always to be for the whole of the attacking force to fly in formation and to all release their bombs at the same time. The noise from such a raid is rather nerve-racking and if accurate very devastating to small towns. However, I never experienced an accurate raid and the only fires from any raids were lorries and coolies' huts on the outskirts of the towns. The bombs all appeared to be 50 lb. anti-personnel type. Once again, here, even when early in 1944 the Japs made an advance into Assam, the R.A.F. ruled the skies and the Jap Air Force was conspicuous by its absence.

The Indian plainsman is not exactly a man of clean habits and the cleanliness of barracks was a constant worry, yet strangely enough machines and appliances always gleamed, for they seemed to enjoy using brasso and brushing every conceivable article.

Tale of the Bunks

Caste and religion play a huge part in Indian life, and one has to be exceedingly careful not to offend any religious principles. I introduced two-berth bunks, much to the horror of some Brahmin Hindus. These are very high caste Hindus and claimed that it would be impossible for them to sleep on them. It was degrading to climb up on the top berth and equally degrading to sleep on the lower with someone else above them. In this case I pointed out that Fire Service "Sahibs" in England slept on such things, so trouble was avoided. And so it went on—a Moslem Leading Fireman would pile all sorts of dirty jobs on any Hindus under him, and vice versa. Great tact and patience was very necessary.

Without going into detail I have endeavoured to give a broad outline of the type of work which I and many others did in India. The time was very usefully used and these organizations will be an asset to the community. The simple uneducated Indian is a good fellow and I confess that I was sorry to leave them when my time was finished. I really felt I was leaving behind some very good friends.

W. BABINGTON



VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

The following details have been received of vacancies circulated and appointments made by the Fire Service Department during the period 1st February—23rd March, 1945.

1. FIREMASTER, PORT FIRE BRIGADE, MOMBASA—invitation issued 2nd February, 1945 to Section Leaders and above.
2. DEPUTY SECRETARY (ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICER) AT NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE, carrying rank of Company Officer—invitation issued to all ranks 16th February, 1945.
3. AREA OFFICER, FIRE FORCE No. 2—invitation issued 27th February, 1945 to Group Officers and Assistant Area Officers.
4. FIRE STAFF OFFICER, GRADE II AT HEADQUARTERS (item 2 of list in last issue). Mr. W. S. Hyde, F.S.O. Grade III at Headquarters and Mr. A. E. Bowles, Divisional Officer No. 5 Region appointed.
5. CHIEF CLERK No. 15 FIRE FORCE (item 5 of list in last issue). Column Officer F. N. Steiner of No. 5 Region appointed.
6. CHIEF CLERK No. 40 FIRE FORCE (item 5 of list in last issue). Column Officer A. Emson of No. 7 Region appointed.