

THE JET



OFFICIAL JOURNAL
of THE NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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THE JET

Official  Journal

THE NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE
OFFICERS ASSOCIATION.

Vol. 2. No. 2.

NOVEMBER 1944

"Crete Hill,"

Westbury-on-Trym,

Bristol. October, 1944.

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to announce the formation of an Editorial Board comprising Mr. E. McKinnell (Technical Articles), Miss M. Bennett (Women's Page), Mr. J. Rees Jones (Legal), Mr. W. J. H. Paton (Literary) and Messrs. J. H. Floyd and G. W. Bennett (Artist and Sub Editor respectively of the original "Jet") together with myself. In addition, there is a Regional Correspondent in each Region to collect material from members. Some of these are aided by Area Representatives and I hope to use this network to maintain liaison between the "producers" and "consumers" of this Journal.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking these voluntary workers and many others who have helped me in different directions for the assistance they have given me to date and in anticipation of further favours to come. With their whole-hearted co-operation and a steady flow of material the value and interest of the Journal to its readers will be enhanced.

I hope individual contributors will excuse me from acknowledging receipt of any articles, letters or other material submitted for publication. One or two items not published in this issue are being held over to the next one—I hope this will be appreciated by the authors. I would like to be inundated with "copy," thus creating competition for space. Again I ask each one of you to ponder and ask yourself whether you cannot produce something to interest your colleagues.

To facilitate printing, articles, reports, letters, etc. should be typewritten on quarto size paper (single sided) double spacing. There is no set time limit for submitting them—send them through your Regional Correspondent at any time.

In conclusion, I would like to clear up one point—the Journal is supplied free of charge to members, the cost being borne out of their subscriptions. It is not "on sale" to non-members, and after the October issue it will replace the free copy of "Fire Protection" previously supplied to members.

Yours sincerely,

A. S. Kay
Editor.

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

6th SEPTEMBER, 1944

THE Council Meeting on the 6th September was held at No. 5 Regional Fire Headquarters, Lambeth, through the courtesy of the Chief Regional Fire Officer, Mr. Delve. Mr. A. E. Kay was in the Chair, and the President, Commander Firebrace, and Vice-Presidents, Messrs. Delve and McKinnell, were also present. Every Region was represented and there was a full meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Sir Eric Studd, Bart. as representing the part-time Service, and also Miss Oddy, Miss McDonald and Mrs. Swan, representing the Women Members, to their first Council Meeting.

VICE-CHAIRMANSHIP

Mr. Reader Harris tendered his resignation as Vice-Chairman on appointment as Honorary Secretary to the Association; this matter was deferred until the next meeting.

REDUNDANT OFFICERS

The Council again considered at length the effect on Officer ranks of the Centralization of Administration, and the forthcoming release of personnel from the Service. As regards the former it was generally agreed that there was little that could be usefully done by the Association because in the face of demobilization it was inevitable that Officers would have to be either discharged from the Service or accept lower ranks. The Council did, however, feel strongly that, although an Officer might perhaps rightly be asked to accept a lower Officer rank, yet no Officer should be expected to accept rank below that of Company Officer or Assistant Group Officer. The loss of status and personal embarrassment was too great.

As regards demobilization the Council decided that the position would be made easier if all ex-regular Officers already entitled to retirement on pension were released forthwith; as regards non-regular Officers it was felt that the Department should be asked to make their position clear by warning them of the possibilities of discharge and giving them an opportunity to seek equally remunerative employment elsewhere. The Chairman of the Council, Vice-President and the Hon. Secretary were asked to form a small deputation to see the Home Office on these points and to raise also the question of the position of Women in the post-war organization.

N.F.S. SELECTION BOARD

One or two Regions had, at a previous meeting, queried the necessity or desirability for the new National Fire Service Officers' Board. It was decided that before coming to a decision on the Association's attitude further information on the subject would be awaited.

INCREASES IN SALARIES

The high-light of the meeting was perhaps the verbal intimation received from the Home Office just before the meeting began that the Secretary of State had authorized increases in pay for certain Officer

Special Council Meeting

ranks. As the Association had been pressing this matter since December 1943, the Council felt strongly that such increases of pay should be made retrospective to the date when negotiations commenced. After noting that Group Officers and Assistant Group Officers were excluded, it was decided to make representations on their behalf forthwith.

THE ASSOCIATION'S JOURNAL

A unanimous resolution was passed congratulating the Editor on his fine work in producing such an admirable edition of "The Jet." It was felt to be fully worthy of the Association and the Hon. Secretary was asked to convey the thanks of the Council to those who had assisted Mr. Kay in its preparation.

POST-WAR FIRE SERVICE

The report of the Post-War Fire Service Committee, of which the Chairman is Mr. Galloway, was prepared in time for the Meeting, but as it had not been circulated consideration was deferred until the Quarterly Meeting of the Council to be held on the 11th October. The Hon. Secretary reminded the Council that since the Post-War Committee first met the whole face of the war had changed, and a decision might soon have to be made by the Government on the all-important question of control of the Fire Service after the war. He felt, therefore, that the time had come when the Association should make its views known to the Department. It was agreed that the matter be referred to Regional Branches for full discussion so that a decision could be reached at the October meeting of the Council. Mrs. Hicks (Region IV) was appointed to serve on the Special Committee.

LIBERATION THANKSGIVING

ON Monday, 28th August, there was held in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral a Service of Thanksgiving for the liberation of the City of Paris from German occupation.

Those attending entered the Cathedral between two lines of French sailors, armed with rifles and looking exceedingly smart. Many French Officers, Naval, Military and Air Force, were present.

The National Fire Service was represented by the Chief of the Fire Staff, Commander Firebrace, and Regional Woman Officer, Mrs. Keith.

At the conclusion of the service, the Band of the Irish Guards played the Marseillaise and the Marche Francaise by Saint-Saens.

The lesson was appropriately chosen from Ecclesiasticus, Chapter LI, verses 1 to 12.

POST-WAR FIRE SERVICE

MANY articles have appeared from time to time on this subject and a wide diversity of opinions expressed, some in favour of the retention of a National Fire Service, others advocating a return to Local Authorities, while one newspaper has informed its readers that Government policy is one of compromise, viz., operational control retained by the Home Office and administration carried out by Local Authorities.

In view of the above, it might be of interest to briefly analyse the position, whilst endeavouring at the same time to retain a purely unbiased outlook on the problem.

No one would do other than concede that, so far as the larger cities and towns are concerned, it is immaterial whether the Service remains National or Local, because the product of a penny rate is such that the maintenance of an efficient Fire Service can be assured on an economic basis; but the point is often overlooked that the product of a rate is dependent, to a large extent, on the prosperity of the town and that, other than large industrial towns, this prosperity is dependent on the business derived from the surrounding area. The same could also be said, to a large degree, about the large industrial town, because its prosperity is dependent on the sale of the commodities produced outside its own boundaries.

It therefore becomes evident that, although there is no legal obligation at present for the large prosperous Authority to assist the small impecunious Authority with regard to fire protection, other than that imposed by Section 1 (5) of the Fire Brigades Act, 1938, which is at present in suspension, there is at least a moral obligation, due to the fact that its prosperity can be said to be dependent on the small town.

How can this obligation best be met? To do this, one must be able to visualize the circumstances and, as an analogy, I would quote the following:—

In the Area where I am serving, there are many small towns, two of them at least Boroughs where the product of a penny rate is only about £30. Now, to meet the cost of upkeep of an efficient Fire Service, excluding any payment to personnel, would entail at least a 6d. rate, and this would scarcely meet the loan charges for appliances, equipment, uniforms, etc., and the maintenance of premises, assuming a 12-year replacement of same and repayment of principal and interest.

It is obvious that the only way to provide adequate and efficient fire protection for the country as a whole is by maintaining a National Fire Service. This could easily be made an economical proposition because, by standardization of appliances, equipment, training, etc., unnecessary expenditure and extravagance would be obviated; also, the community would benefit as a whole and the cost be equitable.

The above can, I feel, be accepted as a fair, unbiased appraisal of the position from an operational point of view, for the three views set out in the commencing paragraph of this article, but gives no indication of how such a Service should be administered and, having no doubt that a definite expression of opinion would lead to controversy, I only propose to set out the position which is likely to accrue should (a)

Post-War Fire Service

Administration be carried out by Local Authorities, or (b) Administration retained by the National Fire Service, be put into effect.

So far as (a) is concerned, there is no doubt that it could be made to function efficiently if undertaken by a County or a large Local Authority, but difficulties are bound to arise in the case of the smaller Authorities, where many of the officials, including the clerk, are only part-time or have only very limited staffs who could not undertake the work in addition to their normal responsibilities.

It must be conceded that, in every case, Authorities will be loath to undertake any responsibility for a Service over which they have no operational control and, in any case, will require to be reimbursed for such work and the cost of the additional staff entailed by same.

The only argument that could be brought against (b) is that it would not appear to be an economical proposition, but is this so in fact, when one considers the total amount which would be paid to Councils throughout the Country for services rendered?

If Finance, Establishments and Stores could be organized on a central basis in a form somewhat similar to the other Services, it would reduce to small dimensions the administrative staff required at other levels; and the cost could quite possibly be met by the amount of expenditure incurred if (a) is adopted.—G.D.

THE N.F.P.A. OF AMERICA

THIS Association exists "to promote the Science and Improve the Methods of Fire Protection and Prevention, to obtain and circulate information on these subjects and to secure the co-operation of its members in establishing proper safeguards against loss of life and property by fire." Its Membership includes over one hundred national and regional societies and associations, and six thousand individuals, corporations and organizations. Fire Officers in this country are eligible for Associate Membership at an annual subscription of ten dollars (of which five dollars is the subscription to the Quarterly Journal), and many members of the N.F.S.O.A. who had been Members of the N.F.P.A. for many years report that they have gained most valuable information of Service and educational interest.

In addition to broadening the outlook of its members on problems of national and international importance, the Association publishes a Quarterly Journal and other valuable and popular literature containing interesting articles and reports on new methods of fire prevention and fire fighting.

Applications for membership should be addressed to:—

National Fire Protection Association,
Executive Office,
60, Batterymarch Street,
BOSTON, Mass., U.S.A.

when details will be sent of the special arrangements made with a London Bank to overcome the difficulty of transmitting dues (subscriptions) to the States.

BITTER EXPERIENCE

THE BOMBAY DOCK DISASTER

THE report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Bombay Dock disaster of last April has been referred to as an exhaustive and courageous report. I suggest it is also a compilation of a series of lessons learned. In their report the Commission states "Many errors and mistakes both of omission and commission go to the building up of the final tragedy," but in effect they also state that "it is easy to be wise after the event." Nevertheless, we should not make the mistake of failing to learn from the tragic mistakes of others.

For the benefit of readers who have not had access to the report, I propose to give a brief outline of the happenings which lead up to fires and explosions resulting in 731 deaths, 2,500 injured and 20 million pounds damage.

The s.s. *Fort Stikine* was a 7,000 ton vessel loaded at Birkenhead with aeroplanes, stores and explosives for Karachi and Bombay. At Karachi she discharged part of her cargo and loaded 8,737 bales of cotton (1,638 tons) 12,000 drums of oil, 9,000 bags (325 tons) of sulphur, 3,700 pieces of timber, and other general merchandise. The whole of the explosives and ammunition remained as originally stowed at Birkenhead, but at Karachi, cotton, timber, oil and sulphur were stowed both above and below the explosives during the reloading. Such haphazard stowage, states the Commission, was wrong and dangerous and a primary cause of the disaster after her arrival at Bombay. At this port sufficient importance was not placed on the necessity to unload ammunition and explosives without delay and the unloading of dried fish was given priority. It was not until twenty-four hours later that the unloading of the explosives began. During the refreshment hour (1230 to 1330) no effective watch was kept and at 1350 hours an alarm of fire was raised. The Commission accepts that the most probable cause of the fire was a cigarette end or lighted match thrown down by someone smoking in the ship's hold. To quote from the report :—"... so was the scene set for the sacrifice of firemen and the destruction of their equipment, which factors were to be such a heavy handicap in fighting the flames so soon to be spread by subsequent explosions about the docks and adjoining godowns and storehouses and into the residential area itself..."

It is established that the fire started among the bales of cotton and when the Fire Service was belatedly informed, water was pumped into the hold, although no effort appears to have been made to get at the seat of the fire. There is no mention in the report of use being made of revolving nozzles, ship's hold branches, i.e. the Slung Branch (see Section iii. *Ships and Fire*) or other special equipment; Breathing Apparatus, although available, was not used, nor were hoses taken down into the hold. Steam injection was not tried and a feeble attempt to cut a hole in the ship's side only served to illustrate the inefficiency of either the operator or the equipment.

The result of the measures adopted was that slow flooding of the lower hold was effected, causing the burning cotton to float up against

Bitter Experience

the underside of the magazines, thus increasing the heat until ignition point was reached and the first explosion occurred. Twenty-seven minutes later there was a second explosion, more devastating and more powerful than the first. Sixty-six firemen were killed and eighty-three injured and the fire fighting potentialities of the city almost nullified; further fires and explosions resulted with a dreadful loss of life, limb and property.

The three main criticisms in the report of the Commission are (1) the stowage of cotton above and below explosives during loading operations at Karachi. (2) Failure at the outset of the fire by those present in authority to appreciate the gravity of the situation. (3) The absence of a centralized executive control invested with power to issue definite instructions.

The first is a matter for the Board of Trade, ship owners and stevedores to give thought to, although my ideal Fire Service would have in its Fire Prevention Department specialist officers with authority to enforce appropriate regulations, compiled and based on recommendations made by the Fire Service Department, Commission or whatever term applies, and analogous to the Board of Admiralty.

The second is one of grave concern to the Fire Officer in that the Fire Service was not immediately notified of the fire because "at first it was not thought that the outbreak was serious," and it was not until forty minutes later that the Fire Service was informed that a ship carrying explosives was on fire. Unfortunately further delay occurred in sending back messages for assistance, and no informative messages to other Services were sent.

Although various authorities' representatives conferred during the fire, no decisive action was taken. No one man appeared to be either assertive enough or strong enough to assume and exercise paramount command. Until such time as our legislation empowers fire officers to assume supreme command at a fire, no matter on whose property, premises or ship it may be, so long will this state of affairs exist. No one is anxious to accept responsibility when a devastating explosion is envisaged, but nevertheless Fire Service Officers will not shirk this responsibility, and will welcome an Act of Parliament which permits them to accept it, provided that they control all operations at fires as the principal executive officers.

In my old Brigade any suggestions're good things to come met with the retort : "that will be the day." Don't you agree? That *will* be the day—when the Fire Service of Great Britain is the Alpha and Omega of fire fighting, fire prevention and fire protection activities throughout the land and aboard our ships, whether at sea or in port.

I have recently had the pleasure of conversing with an officer of the Polish Fire Service, an organization which, prior to the outbreak of war, appears to have been on very sound lines and investing its officers with pre-eminent authority. I look forward to the day when the officers of the British Fire Service are invested with similar, or even more embracing authority.

It is realized that a Fire Officer must accept responsibility for hesitancy in calling assistance, absence of proper informative messages,

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or the inefficient initial handling of the fire situation, etc., etc., but whilst it remains possible for any person to wait until the situation is tragically serious before sending for the Fire Service, so long will officers be faced with extremely difficult and dangerous situations immediately on arrival, and tragedies will continue to occur. If failure to notify the Fire Service can be made punishable by a heavy penalty, many lives and much property will be saved from the ravages of fire.

Cannot the powers that be accept this as a lesson learned and ensure that in our post-war Fire Service we have the benefit of legislation which will prevent an Ordnance Factory, a commercial or industrial undertaking, or one of His Majesty's ships being blown to pieces, together with half a town, because of the self-opinionated decision of the Superintendent, Works Manager or Captain that it was not yet the opportune moment to inform the Fire Service that a fire had broken out.

The third criticism will continue to apply until the Fire Service is recognized as a paramount authority where fire-extinguishing measures are in operation.

Aboard the s.s. *Fort Stikine* there was a consensus of opinion which invested the Master of the ship with paramount authority. This is indicated rather clearly in the exclamation attributed to the Fire Officer and clearly indicating the view he held when he said: "I wish the Captain would make up his mind and get on with the job."

Naturally the Captain's concern was the preservation of his ship as opposed to scuttling. The viewpoint of the representatives of the Bombay Port Trust was the safety of the docks, and of the ships therein: they favoured the battening down of hatches, steam injection and moving the ship into deeper water for scuttling. The Fire Officer, by virtue of his training, held the view that he should continue to fight the fire in order to extinguish it and prevent its spread, and any suggestion to "knock off" so that the ship could be removed to a location out of his jurisdiction for the purpose of scuttling may have been foreign to his beliefs. I contend that if there had been a supreme commander, then this tragic happening may have been avoided. A Fire Force Commander invested with proper authority might have approached the three authorities, each concerned with a common problem, but viewed from different angles, and after considering their views and advice together with the expert opinion of the Ordnance Officer, could have evolved a plan of action and issued executive orders for its enforcement. It was not so, however, and 731 died, 2,500 were injured and 20 million pounds were added to the Fire Losses bill—"MAC."

THE LIFE OF A LENGTH OF HOSE

I WAS born in Ireland: surname Flax, appropriately recognized more or less as a water plant. During my early years I was in a position to hear very many conversations, mostly concerning as to when I, with many others, would be ready to be pulled. I took rather a poor view of this, but after consideration I thought it was much better than having my feet cut off—



you see, they do not cut flax. The day came when large Irish hands commenced to pull us out of the ground and we were harvested in. At this time the small blue flower had fallen from my head, and my stalk was turning from green to a golden brown.

Whilst I was waiting, I overheard that some of us had very fine heads, which meant that the prospect of a good supply of linseed was anticipated for thousands of uses, and—great excitement—our stalks were required to spin a yarn about fire hose. I decided that after various operations I should perhaps find myself in a fine Fire Station to be taken great care of by firemen who knew my worth in an emergency. Even if I lost my head, which I was certain would be of great value in many ways too numerous to tabulate, the prospect of helping to stop fires from helping Hitler greatly appealed.

It was then that we had our heads or "seed bolls" removed, leaving a fine body of stalks which were sorted out into various lengths as far as possible. I heard it mentioned that we had to be "retted" or, in other words, steeped in pond or river water to enable our fibrous parts to be separated easily from the woody core and outside straw-like covering—practically drowning for a few days. After retting we had a terribly back-breaking ordeal through a machine which broke our woody core and straw covering into small pieces, afterwards being passed into a "scrutching" machine which by means of rotating wooden blades continually beat us, causing the broken woody core and straw-covering to fall away, and leaving only the clean fibre ready for spinning or "dressing."

They soon started on us, but did not term it dressing, but "hackling." This meant that the fibre was "combed" by being drawn across "hackles," a process that besides combing the fibre, separates it into two products—firstly "flax-line" or "long flax," from which superior flax yarn is spun, and secondly "tow" from which inferior yarn is spun. Luckily I comprised the first product and then knew for certain that I was for fire hose, and therefore did not worry about the next operation, which was to convert us into continuous ribbon or "slivers." This was done by passing us through rollers that drew us out and at the same time reduced our size. "Slivers" are generally irregular in shape, but this was soon overcome by passing twelve of them through a drawing frame five times, after which we were of correct weight, colour and quality, but of course much smaller in size. In spite of this, I must say we now began to feel very important, but surprisingly they were not yet satisfied with our shape, so we were given a slight twist and then wound onto a bobbin ready to be sent to the spinning frames and begin the yarn.

We soon learnt that they were not yet agreed that our appearance was all to be desired, and went off to the bleaching fields, where we were twice "boiled" in a suitable alkali to neutralize acids. A painful process, but we found that it was entirely for our own benefit—to remove some "petic" or gum and other deleterious matter that would in due course tend to shorten our life, decompose or rot us when we became fire hose. We appreciated this process above all, because it gave us our lustrous finish which is absolutely necessary for making hose soft and pliable. I did overhear during this process that some hose manufacturers give their yarn "one boiling" only, and then a little colouring matter to give it the same appearance as ourselves—but this results in very early death to the hose.

The Life of a Length of Hose

Our appearance *par excellence*, they then had to twist some of us together, termed "doubling" or "trebling" or more as the case may be, and it appeared that for making us into hose they required "two sets" which were to run at right angles to each other. Those that were to run lengthwise were called "warp threads," and those crosswise "weft threads." When we were made up it was found that approximately three or four strands were required for the warp thread and twelve, eighteen, twenty-four or even more for the weft thread. Then there were further discussions as to what type of weaving we had to be made up into—"hand woven" or "power woven." We heard a number of arguments regarding which type was the best, but there seemed no doubt that the "power woven" must take priority owing to the quickness of the weaving. It was decided that something may be said for and against both processes. "Hand woven" was better in one respect—apparently "power woven" tends to punish the yarn very badly. Against the "hand woven" it was said that the man at the loom gets tired and weary towards the end of the day's work, and this must consequently vary the pull on the "weft." When I overheard a gentleman say that the output of a "hand loom" was only about forty yards per week, there was no doubt in my mind that it gave the "power loom" its priority.

As the "canvas hose" was being drawn through the looms I could easily see that the "warp" or longitudinal threads gave the durability to resist wear and tear, while the "weft" or crosswise threads resist the tendency of water pressure to burst us. For this reason the "weft" threads are much thicker than the "warp," and we heard the manager say that in a destruction test of hose by water pressure, it is invariably the "weft" that breaks, explaining why the slit or hole can be seen generally lengthwise and not across the hose.

One day a man came to the factory to buy some hose, and asked many questions. "What was the pressure strength, plus an allowance for wear and tear? Was there a safety margin, and what was the bursting pressure?" I should have told you that some brands of hose are made up in some instances at an adverse balance between the warp and the weft threads i.e. improving the pressure bearer, weft, to the detriment of long life and flexibility, warp, which does not alter the weight of the hose. Buyers also see that the canvas is woven reasonably tight in order that it should have only a small leakage when under pressure. It is possible for hose to be made practically watertight, but this has the disadvantage that it is almost inflexible, easily damaged by chafing and tends to break when badly laid and kinked. It should always be remembered that well-manufactured hose will leak at first, but as the fabric becomes saturated with water the threads swell and render the hose nearly watertight. This swelling is to a great extent retained after use, so that after hose has been used and dried several times it leaks much less than when first used.

No doubt the reader may think that after all this preparation we should be ready to be placed on the fire engine—but not yet. We have to be "burnettised," which is a treatment with zinc chloride to reduce susceptibility to mildew and to add to our softness and flexibility.

Have you ever noticed when handling hose that some lengths are woven different from others? Actually there are two ways, "plain" and "twill." In plain woven hose, which is generally used for unlined hose, the warp threads are woven "under one and over one" throughout the fabric. Please remember that I am of the unlined type, but at the same time I should like you to know a little of my brother "rubber lined," whose weaving is slightly different. It is "twill" or "diagonal" woven, and the warp threads are on the principle of "over two and under one." Such fabric is perhaps stronger and more pliable, but being less watertight than plain woven hose, it is usually manufactured for the lined variety. Leakage from even the best unlined hose is very undesirable, and consequently rubber-lined hose is becoming more and more extensively used, apart from its operational efficiency in the battle to overcome frictional loss. Personally I was pleased to think that I was not of the rubber-lined variety. What a painful process to have one's inside lined with rubber! I'll tell you what happens. Firstly, a good quality rubber tube of the correct size is made, which is then

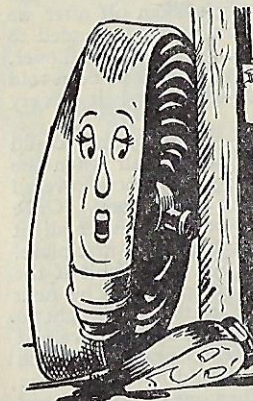
partially vulcanized to harden it and to prevent distortion while it is being inserted into the flax hose. After this it is wrapped with a thin sheet of black rubber termed "backing," which is easily soluble when heated. The hose is laid out at full length in a specially-constructed trough, and then held in position while the prepared rubber lining and "backing" is drawn into it by means of a line. When the lining is in position, one end of the hose is connected to a steam pipe, the other end being blanked off except for a small drain-cock. The hose is then subjected to steam pressure, the heat of which melts the black soluble rubber and causes the rubber lining proper to become fused to the hose, also completing the vulcanizing. The steam pressures used are 25 lb. per square inch for the first 30 minutes, after which it is increased to 50 lb. which is maintained for periods up to one hour. These pressures are varied according to acceleration agents that may be used in the soluble rubber.

Rubber lining adds nothing to the strength of the hose, the pressure of the water being resisted entirely by myself—Flax. In fact, the rubber lining has a tendency of detracting from the strength of the hose, because flax when saturated with water is stronger than when dry, and the lining obviously prevents this saturation. Lined hose is heavier to handle than unlined, but if well looked after is more durable, although I say this against myself.

Now at last an able-bodied, though unlined, length of hose, I found myself taken to a grand looking fire station with red doors (which I am sure you know quite well) and placed on a rack in the hose store. I was not alone: there were many others with me, but by what I could see of it they had been in the wars, as they all showed me large and small patches. This made me shudder, and I began to wonder what kind of existence I was going to experience. I forgot to mention that before I left the factory they supplied me with new head and feet, which they called male and female couplings—my first connection with the opposite sex!

Not many days after leaving my factory birth-place I feared that my life might be shortened. Alongside me on the rack was an aged length of hose suffering from mildew—a very contagious complaint which affects even the youngest and strongest constitution. Of course, I should not have been put with this defective hose—please remember this when next you have new arrivals on the station, because prevention is better than cure. Thank heavens I wasn't there long! One day all the appliances were sent out to a fire and on their return all the hose was dirty and wet, requiring immediate replacement. My moment had come, and I was soon on one of those bright red engines thinking to myself: "If these men know how to handle and take care of me like they do this appliance, I shall live to a ripe old age and fulfil everyone's highest expectations."

When I had settled down and had a chance to look around, much to my horror I noticed a large oil can, looking oily and dirty as oil cans can, and rather down the spout. In fact, it was making me very dirty with oil, and I knew how very careful they had been in the factory about oil—if the slightest drop came in contact with us the parts were cut away and destroyed. Unfortunately I was powerless, so here I was, now only a few weeks old and unused, but branded with an ugly scar for the rest of my life.



One day, while I was worrying about my oily wound, the bells went down and in a few seconds we were out of the station. Being shut in a box I could not imagine where we were going, but by the distance I knew that it must be far out into the country—probably to a heath fire. The appliance pulled up with a screeching of brakes, and I heard the now familiar command "Get to work." Plenty of hose was required, and within a few minutes I was taken from my box and thrown to the ground with a terrible crash—in fact, so hard

that my head (male coupling) stuck right into my side, giving me a nasty bruise. Soon after this I was picked up again by a fireman who evidently had more consideration; he tucked me under his arm and carried me quite a distance, eventually laying me down not far from the fire, which I could see was burning very fiercely. I was then connected to another length, and the water soon flowed through my inside at a great pressure. Oh! how those two wounds of mine suffered: but I refrained from leaking and remained unnoticed. All was going well until the officer in charge called out that he wanted to move his branches further into the job, and without any warning we were dragged along the ground and I eventually found myself lying on some very hot earth. As the water had been knocked off for the purpose of this operation, it was not long before I could feel the heat burning my side and I prayed that the water could be turned on to help cool me down. Surely it was not right for such a faithful servant to suffer such indignities! Presently the water arrived, but owing to the weakness of my bruised and burnt side, I had no alternative but to burst, the pressure being so great that it rent a gaping hole in my side no less than four inches in length. As previously mentioned, this was lengthwise, without any doubt due to the very severe burn I had received only a few moments before.

So I was taken out of the line, laid out with my head and feet tied in an overhand knot which rendered me useless during the rest of the fire, and, what was extremely galling, with only a few weeks' service to my credit. I overheard one of the firemen remark: "This hose is no good. We've only had it a few weeks and it's burst." I wonder if he would have been alive to handle hose if his mother had not nursed and looked after him when he was young. What ignorance!

When the fire was extinguished I was collected up and placed back on the engine, shortly arriving back at the station. Much to my surprise I heard that there were eight burst lengths during the fire, and came to an instant conclusion that all had suffered burns like myself. I was soon taken out of the hose box, and longed for a good wash. I had been rolled up feet first, and felt not a little disconcerted lying with my head among everyone else's feet. The whole world seemed upside down, and I was depressed in more ways than one. I did not receive that anticipated wash, and was not even unrolled, but placed in a corner of a small shed not far from a boiler that heated the water for the station. I was not alone in my plight—the whole eight of us were dumped into the shed, with a remark "I don't know when we shall have a chance to repair these." The heat at times was excessive, and parts of us were scorched while others were not receiving any heat at all. In addition, the dirt on us was drying in hard cakes that would certainly injure us when taken off after we were dry. It was several days before a fireman eventually condescended to inspect us, and he seemed most surprised to find that we were not dry all over. I at once came to the conclusion that the firemen on this station had been told very little of the care and maintenance of hose and considered it a very poor show.

When at last I was unrolled, alas! how stiff I was. Actually they could hardly straighten me out at all, and I practically cracked in half when the heaviest fireman on the station came along with his hob-nailed boots covered with road grit and started to walk over the whole length of my body. Once more I was suffering, this time from scratches top and bottom. After all, it was only through their own neglect that I would not lay flat in the first place. No doubt it was ignorance on their part, and perhaps not their fault if the station officer had neglected his duty during the lecture period. The next sight before me was some large stiff brooms and a jet of water. I thought to myself "Now I am going to have the wash and brush up that I should have had on returning from the fire." All eight of us were now being sprayed with the jet, and when they started to use the broom on us you should have heard the language because the hard mud would not leave us! Then one of the men had a brain-wave. "I'll soon shift that," he said, and at once appeared with a wire brush which, when he used all his strength, very soon moved the hard mud—but also frayed a considerable patch of flax in the process. I could not help feeling how selfish these men were, for it may not be them who would suffer

at a fire when water was urgently required and the hose could not stand up to the pressure. As soon as we had been washed we were carried to a drying tower: this we appreciated very much, as a little while before this I saw a poor length of hose being dragged along the ground, picking up grit during its travels which must have injured it terribly. We were hoisted up into this tower, but in a very unsatisfactory manner. I had my head entangled in my pal's feet, both of which were placed over a gallows and hoisted up to a height of 60 ft. throwing the whole weight of our bodies on our feet and head, which tended to be far too much strain on us. It would not have been half so bad if they had secured us so as to take the weight off our couplings. Once again, ignorance was bliss at this station. Owing to bad weather we were left here quite a few days, but eventually the sun did shine and we were ready to be taken down. In this process we were all subjected to terrible blows on our head and feet, the couplings suffering severe abrasions. We were all bundled into a huge heap, and it seemed almost impossible that we should ever be disentangled from one another; but soon large hands were pulling all ways at once, and one discontented fireman gave us a sharp kick just because he had been detailed for the job against his will. Perhaps one day he may realize that he was injuring his best friend.

Because of my wound that had still to receive attention, I was placed on one side and watched the remainder being rolled up. I noticed with disgust that after some of them had been rolled and did not come quite square, the men purposely laid them on their sides and jumped on them with their great ugly boots. "Now for it" I said to myself as I was taken away into a small room, for I could see a vulcanizing outfit which reminded me of the factory where I was born into the hose world. How I wished that I had never left, and wondered whether all hose was treated as I was. I hate to say it, but it cuts me to the flaxen quick when I think that in many cases the care of hose is sadly neglected, especially when one hears of the incredible amount of condemned hose cast away per year. Eventually I had a large patch placed over my four-inch wound, but I should have felt much more comfortable and secure if a few stitches had been put in first—just like a deep flesh wound—you see it would have taken much of the strain off the patch. But I am now resigned to the fact that the personnel on this particular station knew very little about me, and in fact did not appreciate what trouble the makers go to to supply the best of everything, which is essential for dependable fire-fighting operations.



It seemed at this stage that my life in the Service was to be very short, and to add to my despondency I was no sooner placed on the appliance than the bells went down again.

Within no time I was got to work on some very large buildings, which were well alight. The firemen hoisted me to the top of a building over a parapet, and oh! I cannot explain how roughly and sharply the stonework jabbed into my side, already weakened by my last operation. Every moment I thought I should burst, and I knew that the fireman at the branch could not be receiving the pressure he so badly required: but I was helpless to rectify the kink. How simple it would have been to place a canvas bucket or two under me at that point! At last I was moved and found myself being pulled through a window from which the glass had broken, and I received many bad cuts on my sides but not quite deep enough to cause me to burst at that moment, for the pressure was low. Alas! I knew only too well that I should give way once I was tested, and it was more than evident that this would be my last job on the fire ground although I was only in my first few months. By this time my many cuts were getting weaker, in fact, a few were beginning to show signs of bad leakage.

During this time I was looking around and could see other hose in the road—

The Life of a Length of Hose

way going through much worse than myself. A large ten-ton motor passed over one length which had no protection whatever: of course, this should have been protected with road ramps. Then I saw others lying in the gutter with all the broken glass and grit surrounding them. With just a little thought this could have been avoided by keeping the hose a few inches out of the gutter to allow the water to carry all such injurious matter away—but no one seemed to give us any thought, and once more caused unnecessary torture. What a different life we might have had!

The fire on the top floor was now under control, and I was lowered down to the ground by a line which was quite comfortable, and I thought for a moment that I was under different command. But I soon found out my mistake, for I was pulled all through the broken glass by far more men than it would have taken to carry me, and how I suffered in this move is an extremely sore point which I'd rather not dwell upon. I was then got to work on the ground floor, and I heard someone shout that they required 120 lb. pressure. I fainted at the prospect, knowing full well that ignorance was taking a large part in these fire fighting operations—after all, I was only 100 ft. from the pump. But the pump operator kept to his instructions, and in a few moments up came the pressure—Oh! the bursts in my sides were not caused by laughter, I can tell you! All of them occurred where I had received the cuts and the nasty oily patch, and I knew at once that this was the finish of my service.

The fire extinguished, we were rolled up and returned to the station to be treated in the same manner as before. When brought out for repair the gruff voice of the officer in charge said "Condemned, unrepairable: cut her up for hose ramps." I was rather surprised at this, and doubted whether he actually knew what hose ramps were really for; if so, he had not acted upon his knowledge.

I was now about 7 months old, and had been used at two fires, repaired once, cut and burst many times and was now condemned at an early age. After a time I was deprived of my much-damaged head and feet and cut up into short pieces for ramps.

* * *

And that, dear reader, was my life. How degrading to be forced to swallow sand and suffer the racking pains of rivets driven through my ribs, then to be thrown into a corner with the prospect of having my last breath squeezed out of me by soulless vehicles. Only two fires to my credit, but I hope that my death will be a lesson to all concerned with fire hose. We can only do our duty if we are treated reasonably—and officers should remember this particularly when issuing instructions to personnel under their care. We of the Flax family do not ask to be stowed away in cotton wool. Frequent use is what we require, but only **USE WITH DISCRETION AND CARE.**

Coy.O. B.



With acknowledgment to J. Griffiths.

FUEL AND LIGHT EMOLUMENTS

ENQUIRIES received from members indicate that the increased emoluments payable in certain cases are not generally known.

Where the reasonable outgoings of an entitled Officer on fuel and light are higher than the prescribed allowance it may be increased by not more than 25%.

Former Officers of the London Fire Brigade entitled to these emoluments can be divided into two classes—those who formerly received composite cash allowances and those who were given the emoluments in kind. The former class are now entitled to an allowance at the rate of £26 per annum, whilst the others are entitled to the allowances at the higher rates prescribed in para. 1 (b) (iii) of the Instruction.

"BATH" WATER!

THE first 12" spun cast iron main with Stanton-Wilson joints to be laid in this country was installed in that well-known west-country watering place, the City of Bath. It runs from the Colonnade up Boat Stall Lane, rising vertically 30 feet to the road level, and after crossing the main road in the centre of the City, terminates at Orange Grove, adjacent to Bath Abbey and the Guildhall, into two tanks which are connected underground with a twin line of 12" cast iron piping of the same type as the main.

This main was laid by N.F.S. personnel and each length is 12 ft. long and weighs 8-9 cwt. There are several types of bends used—90° 45° 22½° 11¼°—and each bend weighs between 3 and 3½ cwt.

The pipe line is fed from the River Avon by a fixed horizontal centrifugal split-casing type pump with 10" suction flange and 8" delivery flange with taper adaptor to suit the 12" main. The pump is driven by a Ford V.8 engine and the output at 2,250 revs. per minute is as follows:—

40' Head — 2,800 g.p.m.

60' Head — 2,500 „

80' Head — 2,000 „

The quantity of water contained in the pipe is about 14½ galls. per yard. To give some idea of friction loss, when delivering 2,500 galls. per minute the friction loss over level ground is approximately 1½' to 2' Head per 100 feet and the average velocity 7'—8' per second.

J. H.

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.

WOMENS' Page

THE EDITORIAL "WE" RELUCTANTLY ACQUIRES AN ASSISTANT

We were sitting in our office, involved in the double intricacies of dealing with material for the "Women's Page" and a corn-cob, when there was a hearty bang at the door, as of someone knocking against it with a stick. With the skill born of long practice, we swiftly deposited the remains of our corn-cob in the drawer of our desk, and testily called "Come in!"

The door opened, and a tall, green-eyed Group Officer strolled across our two feet of floor space and decoratively sank into the one comfortable chair which we have managed both to acquire and retain. "Hello," she said amiably, "I'm on your Editorial Staff."

We intimated, frostily, that the Editorial Staff happened to be composed of ourselves, that we didn't want anyone else, and moreover, wouldn't have anyone else.

"I think you'll have me," said the green-eyed Group smoothly, "I could be very useful to you. You see, I happen to be half a witch—I was born on Hallowe'en."

Slightly startled, we hastily turned to our calendar to see what Hallowe'en implied, found that All Souls' Day either clashed or co-operated with it and, dizzily deciding that it was all too much for us, murmured that we weren't sure that we would like a witch, either whole or part-time, attached to us, especially one who thumped upon our door with such unnecessary energy.

The Group-Witch nonchalantly waved her hand in the air, and to our astonishment and indignation, the unfinished corn-cob appeared in her slender fingers, insult being added to injury by the fact that the end which had already been attacked by us had apparently been neatly sliced off by unseen minions or confederates.

"Delectable," she announced after sampling our lost sustenance, "I'm so glad that you like corn-cobs, because I do, too. They are, in fact, a favourite witch-food. We always have them at our meetings of the Associated British Witches."

Without giving us time to work out this statement, which we dimly thought might involve us in future financial commitments, she continued:

"I'm sorry about the bang on the door which you just mentioned, but you see, I arrived upon a deck-scrubber and made rather a poor landing. The trouble is that I'm not used to them as yet, but my broomstick wore out recently and I couldn't get a new one because of reduced war production. I hated to part with it, but it was so worn out that I couldn't even send it to the 'Make Do and Mend' people."

Apprehensively glancing at our wall maps, and feeling that she might turn them into "Motor Routes through Fairyland" at any moment were we to cross her, we weakly murmured that we didn't mind at all about the bangs on the door, and we would consult the Productions Officer



about the broomstick situation, and we were sure that she would be a great asset to the Editorial Staff of the "Women's Page."

Women's Page

Upon this the green-eyed Group appeared to be pleased. She mentioned something about a Roving Commission, and imperiously waved her hand, whereupon the door of the office and/or Editorial Sanctum flew open and a deck-scrubber lurched in in the manner of a horse looking for a rider; she sprang onto it, and joyously rose through our window, leaving us with a smashed pane of glass, an R.D.W.I. to be filled in immediately, and considerable apprehensions as to the first contribution which might be expected from Our Roving Reporter.

We suppose that we could refuse it, but have a disagreeable feeling that if we do so, we shall find ourselves and our office maliciously transported to, for instance, the Gobi Desert or the less pleasant parts of the Amazon, and we think personally that we would prefer to be burdened with her literary effusions rather than be subjected to the ungovernable emotions of an Associated British Witch.

UNIFORMS

The following paragraph appeared in the "Daily Sketch" on Sept. 21st, 1944:

"An N.F.S. order referring to demobilization states that members may, if they wish, keep certain N.F.S. clothing as their personal property when they are discharged. The articles include one great-coat, one tunic, one pair each of trousers and shoes."

It is to be hoped that this order, if authentic, will apply also to the women Officers, particularly in view of the fact that many of them found it necessary to spend more on uniforms than the allotted allowance.

FIREWOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The C.W.F.O. has sent us a letter from Lady Reading in which the latter expresses appreciation of N.F.S. help given to the W.V.S., of which organization she is the Chairman, and we reproduce it below.

Firewomen all over the country have certainly done magnificent work, frequently in their off-duty time, not only by knitting for the European Clothing Relief Scheme, but by aiding in the opening and running of the hostels for evacuees from the flying-bomb areas, making toys both for the hostels and war-time nurseries and by assisting in hospitals.

There is no doubt, however, that without the encouragement, leadership and appreciation shown to them by their Officers, both senior and junior, the response to these various appeals would have been by no means great. Not only has the responsibility of organization rested with the Officers, but they have set an example to the women under their command by taking an active share in the jobs themselves, particularly in the preparing of hostels, when they have rolled up their shirt sleeves and joined in any scrubbing, dusting or general cleaning which has come along. Obviously they have not had the time to do this work continuously, but the fact of their having joined in once or twice has been a tremendous incentive, proving that, broadly speaking, the theory that an Officer should be prepared to perform any task (unless, of course, it be specialized) which she asks her women to do, holds good in practice.

Lady Reading's letter is but one appreciation of results which have been largely due to "behind the scenes" work by Officers.

Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence,
41 Tothill Street,
Westminster,
S.W.1.

18th August, 1944.

SR/LG.

Dear Mrs. Cuthbert,

I am thrilled to hear that the Firewomen of the National Fire Service have generously undertaken their share of the knitting which the women of this country are being called on to do at this moment.

I want to express to them my very sincere thanks for co-operating in this way, and to tell them that in so doing they will be playing their part in helping

Women's Page

to provide the much-needed clothing for the children in the countries of Europe as they are liberated.

I know that they are all fully occupied with their duties, and that for them, as for the greater part of all who are undertaking this knitting programme, it may at first seem an irksome extra to shoulder; but we cannot let our fingers be idle for a moment, whether we are on or off duty, while we know that so much depends on what each individual can do.

You will appreciate that machinery is not available for making these garments, and that if we, the women of Great Britain, do not do them the children will go without. I am hoping that everybody capable of knitting will not only make their individual contribution, but will also encourage others to follow suit, and in this way we may outstrip all our targets both in time and quantity.

As Chairman of W.V.S. I send my grateful thanks to the Firewomen who are proving, yet again, their preparedness to meet emergencies.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Cuthbert, C.B.E.,
Home Office (Fire Service Department),
Horseferry House.

(Sgd.) STELLA READING
Chairman

POST-WAR PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN OFFICERS OF THE NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE

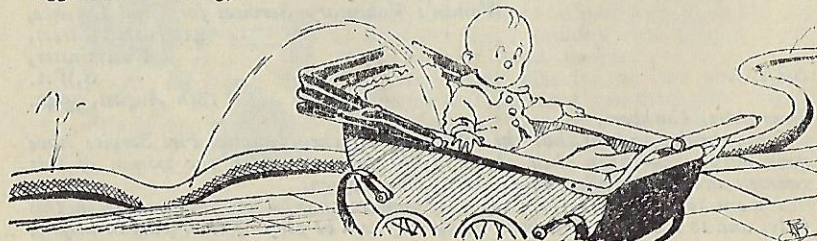
By "GROUP OFFICER," SCOTLAND

At this stage of the war it would be interesting to consider the Post-War Fire Service and its prospects for women Officers. We hear of various schemes and projects for our male colleagues, but what attractions will the Fire Service have to offer to the women? What particular posts will be open to them—Administrative or Operational?—and what will be the opportunities for promotion?

Suggestions would be interesting, particularly from Women Officers of the Service giving the difficulties encountered in their work. Perhaps I may start the ball rolling by giving some ideas of my own:

1. It is essential that a woman Officer's rank be clearly defined. Their markings should be similar to those of the male Officers, as in the Armed Forces. This would obviate many of the anomalies which arise in the definition of the duties of men and women Officers.
2. I suggest that uniforms for female personnel should be abolished. The prospect of having to wear a uniform when one is nearing retiral age would not be pleasant, and I think would deter many women from entering the Service.
3. Should the Fire Service continue as a National body? I suggest that all Administrative personnel should be employed under the Treasury in a civilian capacity, i.e., they should be Civil Servants. This would mean admission to the Service by examination, and the usual pension rights, etc. This system might apply under Local Authorities.

(Editor's Note.—The writer of this article suggests that it might be helpful to the Service were further ideas as to Post-War prospects put forward. The Editor would be interested particularly to learn how many Women Officers agree with suggestions 2 and 3).



REGION *by Region.*

NORTHERN (No. 1) REGION

A Regional Committee meeting was held at Durham on 31st August, 1944 under the Chairmanship of Mr. T. A. Varley, O.B.E., M.I.FireE., in the absence of Mr. W. H. Mardon, who was unfortunately on sick leave. It was resolved:—

- REGIONAL COMMITTEE (1) That this Committee is opposed to the system of a Central Selection Board.
- (2) That it is considered at this stage that the selection or any attempt to categorize officers for a Post-War Fire Service is premature, as the settling of the Post-War policy of control and the formation of the Fire Areas is the first consideration, after which it will be known what positions are to be filled and those eligible should then be invited to apply.

When Mr. T. A. Varley, O.B.E., came to the North East as Chief Regional Fire Officer for No. 1 (Northern) Region, he felt that there was a need for a bookshop run on similar lines to the London Region

MINSTERACRES Book Club. The result was that in May of this year, Minsteracres Bookshop opened at what was then

No. 1 Regional Reserve Station (now No. 1 Area Training School). Believed to be the second of its kind in the country, it is now in a flourishing condition.

No fewer than 1,000 books have been supplied to the Bookshop since its inception. Firemen throughout the Region are given the opportunity of obtaining technical books and guidance on the choice of suitable instructional reading.

NORTH EASTERN (No. 2) REGION

At the invitation of the Chairman of the Council, a representative of the Officers in the Region attended a Regional Correspondents' Conference and the last National Council meeting. Meetings of Officers

INTEREST (members and non-members) in the four Areas were subsequently arranged. Two have been held and the *raison d'être* of the Association freely discussed. Increased membership and interest is confidently expected.

It has been found that Officers generally have little or no knowledge of the Association's object or activities—"The Jet" should overcome this now. There is no doubt more will be heard from the north-east.

Meanwhile Assistant Fire Force Commander H. G. Reynolds has returned to No. 5 Area. He was transferred to No. 16 Fire Force (No. 6 Region) on 19th April, 1944, for special duties.

NORTH MIDLAND (No. 3) REGION

A Regional meeting held at Derby on the 9th September, 1944, was fairly well attended, and was presided over by Mr. C. H. Wilkinson of No. 10 Area.

Among the matters discussed by the members, the question REGIONAL as to the value of the N.F.S. Selection Board was one which METTING aroused most interest. Members expressed various opinions; some feeling that the Selection Board from a statistical and information point of view would be of great value after the war. Others felt that it was an unsatisfactory method of deciding whether an Officer was a good Officer or not, and regarded unfavourably any suggestions that the results of the Board should be communicated to the candidates. Finally, it was agreed by the members that while they thought the Selection Boards should continue,

Region by Region

the results should not be passed down to the candidate or to any Senior Officer, but should be retained at the Home Office for record purposes.

In view of the present releases from the N.F.S. and the possible transfer of members into the Armed Forces, the representatives of No. 9 Area considered it was essential that service with the N.F.S. should be taken into account by the Army authorities for demobilization and pay purposes, and following a discussion it was eventually agreed that the National Council should be asked to approach the appropriate authorities to ensure that Officers would be able to enjoy these benefits.

A very brief discussion also took place upon Post-War Fire Service, and as the meeting was informed that a Sub-Committee of the Council would be shortly submitting a report on this matter, it was agreed to hold a special Regional Meeting of members as soon as this report was received.

EASTERN (No. 4) REGION

Two members of the Association have been awarded Honours by H.M. The King in recognition of courage of a high order at a fire at an ammunition dump in this Region. C.R.F.O. Benton becomes an Officer, and A.F.F.C. Welch a member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

A meeting was held at Cambridge on the 9th September under the Chairmanship of Mr. S. J. F. Davis, who reported on the Council Meeting which he and Mr. Heptinstall attended on the 6th September. Also, that REGIONAL membership of the Association in the Region had risen by MEETING leaps and bounds and he trusted that the progress would continue.

Subjects discussed at the meeting included Redundancy of Officers due to Centralization, *The Jet*, the National Fire Service Officers' Board and the Post-War Fire Service.

LONDON (No. 5) REGION

For three months "exigencies of the service" had prevented a meeting of the London Branch, but a full meeting was held on the 27th September.

The Secretary was able to report a very satisfactory increase REGIONAL in the membership of the Branch, which has now reached the MEETING total of 476 members, nearly 400 more than the membership of the Branch a year ago.

The main item on the agenda was Post-War Organization, and the Chairman, Mr. A. Netherwood, explained to the meeting that the Branch Committee was anxious to place before the National Council the views of No. 5 Branch on what the shape of the Post-War Fire Service should be.

The discussion had scarcely opened when it became apparent that there was a wide divergence of opinion on the matter. The speakers divided into two schools of thought, those who wanted a National Fire Service which would be completely controlled by Fire Officers, with their own National Council or Board, and those who considered that local authorities had been paying the piper to a considerable extent, and had some right to call the post-war tune.

It was urged by the former that the Fire Officer's duties and responsibilities should be widened enormously so that the putting out of fires became but a small part of his job. He should be given extensive powers of an inspectorial nature, and that generally he should have obligations as regards fire protection and fire prevention. Such a wide view of the Fire Officer's duties, it was argued, would raise the standard of the profession and offer greater scope for advancement and the general well-being of members of the Fire Service. All the speakers wanted to see a National Fire Service, under the control of the Home Office, with all authority removed from the local authorities, except one speaker who wanted to see County Fire Services.

The opposition agreed that the Fire Officer's functions could be widened, and they heartily supported any efforts made to raise the standard of the profession and increase the prestige of the Fire Officer, but insisted that the local authorities were entitled to be represented and consulted.

Region by Region

When the Chairman called for a vote, the meeting agreed by a considerable majority:

"That the Fire Service should remain under the control of the Central Government and be known as the National Fire Service, with the Local Authorities fully represented on the Council or Board which would act as the executive body."

Column Officer A. S. Shawyer was commended by the C.R.F.O. for his work at an incident. Assisted by a Section Leader, Mr. Shawyer rescued four women and a man from the debris of a house and shop. These people were buried so deep under the debris that the rescuers had to burrow seven feet underground and a further fifteen feet through the wreckage before the victims were reached. Nearly all the debris had to be removed by hand and operations were further hampered by escaping gas.

SOUTHERN (No. 6) REGION

A meeting of the Regional Committee was held at Reading on Thursday, 10th August, under the Chairmanship of Company Officer P. G. Boulter.

The agenda included a report by the Honorary Secretary REGIONAL on the membership of the Regional Branch and the COMMITTEE question of the collection of outstanding subscriptions.

Application for payment of subscriptions had already been made to all members in arrears and it was agreed that a further personal letter be sent to all such members and the results reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was resolved that out-of-pocket expenses incurred by members attending meetings of the Regional Committee should be paid out of Branch funds. The giving effect to the decision of the Council on the provision of Legal Assistance was fully discussed and it was decided that, for the time being, requests for legal advice should be dealt with by the Chairman.

Replies to the Questionnaire on Conditions of Service in the Post-War Fire Service were considered and approved by the Committee.

It was agreed that a Representative should be appointed in each Area who would be responsible for obtaining and forwarding to the Regional Correspondent particulars of all matters of interest for publication in "The Jet."

It was also agreed that members of the Overseas Contingent should be empowered to elect one of their number to serve on the Regional Committee.

Behind the commendation of Divisional Officer Dawe, Fire Force 16, by Sir Harry Haig, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., the Regional Commissioner for the Southern Region, lies the story of good team work between the SOUTH COAST Royal Navy and the National Fire Service.

As part of the preparations for the assault on Normandy there were many Naval and Military ammunition dumps located in the South Coast areas, and soon after

"D Day" a call of fire was received to a dump situated in a moat near a South Coast Naval Dockyard. By the time the first pump arrived the fire had obtained a strong hold and ammunition was exploding in all directions. Naval officers and other members of the Naval fire-fighting service were on the scene, and the situation was particularly hazardous as it involved varied types of ammunition, including depth charges, naval type smoke floats and Bofors ammunition. Shells were exploding and throwing their fragments with considerable velocity in all directions. To tackle the fire, the Naval officers and N.F.S. officers surveyed the ground and as a result a few of them, including the Divisional Officer, descended into the 40-ft. moat whilst additional pumps were ordered on to get a water relay into operation. Jets were directed on to the heart of the fire at close range from inside the moat as a fairly strong wind interfered with good jets played from the top. The bulk of the ammunition was saved and the spread of fire prevented to nearby magazines and dumps.

Subsequently the Naval officers were commended in Orders by the Commander in Chief, and Divisional Officer Dawe was commended by the Regional Commissioner, who said that the manner in which he discharged his duties without regard to personal danger was in accordance with the highest traditions of the Fire Service.

Region by Region

SOUTH WEST (No. 7) REGION

Two members of the No. 17 Area Branch have recently retired on pension. They are Divisional Officer W. R. Blower, formerly Chief Officer of the Torquay Brigade, and Column Officer A. P. Brown, formerly an Inspector in the Bristol Police Fire Brigade. Mrs. I. E. Atkinson, a member of the No. 39 Area Branch, has transferred to No. 22 Area Branch, No. 8 Region, and her place has been taken by another member—Mrs. Weaver of No. 40 Area Branch, No. 9 Region.

WELSH (No. 8) REGION

The promotion of Senior Company Officer E. Pickles, LL.B. to the rank of Column Officer has given considerable pleasure to all ranks in Region 8. Mr. Pickles was a member of the Auxiliary Fire Service in 1939 and for a short time served in Area 22. He was then appointed Establishments Officer at Regional Headquarters, a post he has since held for the past three years. He has been prominently connected with Welfare and Benevolence, and was responsible for drafting the Regional Constitution of the National Fire Service Benevolent Fund, which received favourable comment from other Regions.

As the Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Legal Adviser of the Regional Council of the Fund, he has thrown himself wholeheartedly into the work. A keen cricketer, he has of late recovered some of the form which gained him recognition by the well-known Yorkshire amateur club, the Craven Gentlemen.

In peace time he was a practising solicitor at Wrexham. He possesses a keen sense of humour and derives considerable pleasure in helping those who cannot help themselves. Mr. Pickles takes over the post of Chief Clerk, formerly held by Column Officer D. C. Mitchell, who has assumed similar duties at No. 21 Area Headquarters in place of Divisional Officer H. Bleasdale.

Divisional Officer H. Bleasdale, Chief Clerk of the No. 21 Fire Force, has accepted an Army Commission and a War Office appointment. He was primarily responsible for inaugurating the No. 21 Area Branch of the Association and also drafted the original statement from which the Association's Pension Scheme for Officers resulted. A send-off dance was held at Swansea when a presentation of a silver cigarette case and a wallet of notes was made by has obtained an appointment under the Army Civil Affairs Administration. Fire Force Commander Bates on behalf of members of the Fire Force.

Until his recent resignation, Divisional Officer G. A. Bainbridge, Area 20, was considered to be the oldest serving officer in the National Fire Service. A native of Lincolnshire, Divisional Officer Bainbridge started his career 44 years ago in the Sheffield City Police Fire Brigade, afterwards holding appointments as Chief Officer to the Eccles (Lancs.) Fire Brigade, Superintendent to the St. Helen's Brigade, and finally Superintendent of the Cardiff City Police Fire Brigade. On the nationalization of the Service he was posted as Divisional Officer at Pontypridd. In the early days of the war he was for a time in charge of a big oil tank fire in West Wales and during a remarkable career has been awarded seven decorations, including a medal for conspicuous bravery. He is a Licentiate of the Institution of Fire Engineers and is now serving in a part-time capacity as an operational Staff Officer in Fire Force 20.

Senior Company Officer W. H. Blackford, former secretary of the No. 21 Area Branch of the N.F.S. Officers' Association, has obtained his release from the Service and returned to civilian life. Mr. Blackford held the appointment of Area Finance Officer and was Honorary Treasurer of the Area Benevolent Council and Welfare Association, as well as the Area Representative on the Regional Council, which at its meeting on 24th September accepted his resignation with regret and placed on record their appreciation of his valuable services.

MIDLAND (No. 9) REGION

The monthly meeting of the Regional Committee held at Birmingham on 8th August was attended by representatives from Areas 24 and 40. The Regional Secretary and Legal Adviser, Mr. H. R. Lucas, was in

REGIONAL
COMMITTEE
the Chair, and stressed the generous hospitality that had been extended to members of the Council by C.R.F.O. Delve at the recent meeting of the National Council held in London on the 12th July, and a vote of thanks to Mr. F. W. Delve was recorded.

Region by Region

Eighteen new applications for membership (including F.F.C. Kerr and D.F.F.C. Gayton) were received and elected, emanating from each of the Fire Force Areas in the Region.

The Regional Correspondent, Mr. Brown, reported that it was difficult to obtain suitable contributions for publication in "The Fire Ground" and "The Jet" and read a letter received from the Chairman of the Council concerning the appointment of Area Representatives. Each Area Branch was asked to appoint an Area Representative to assist in obtaining material for publication.

The Council Representatives then reported on the progress made at the recent meetings of the National Council and the appointment of Mr. R. Reader Harris as Honorary Secretary was warmly welcomed. The concession of private purchase of uniforms by Officers to all ranks was considered most satisfactory.

After discussion upon a resolution from Area 24, it was resolved that the National Council be asked to obtain the advice of Insurance Experts and formulate an Insurance Scheme to be available to members at favourable premiums.

A special meeting of the Regional Committee was held on Monday, 4th September at Birmingham, to obtain the views of the Committee on certain matters to be discussed at a special meeting of the National Council to be held in London on Wednesday, 6th September.

Mr. H. R. Lucas was in the Chair, the meeting being attended by representatives from Areas 24, 25 and 40.

Six new members were elected to the Association, one from Area 24, two from Area 25 and three from Area 40.

The Treasurer submitted the Quarterly Financial Report which showed a Regional Branch balance of £32 6s. 3d.

The Committee discussed at some length the position of redundant Officers in the light of recent Home Office instructions and unanimously agreed that the National Council should make the strongest representations

REDUNDANT
OFFICERS to the Home Office to ensure that Officers now discharged from the National Fire Service should, if required to take up duties in one or other of the Armed Services, enter that Service at equivalent rank; or, if no suitable vacancy existed, be permitted to find suitable employment in essential industry. Mr. Lucas said he felt sure that the National Council would concur with this view-point.

The Committee also discussed the newly created National Fire Service Officers' Board and were in complete agreement with the view-points expressed in correspondence which was read to the meeting. It was felt that the purpose and activities of the Selection Board should be made known to individual members by the Secretary of the National Council.

NORTH WESTERN (No. 10) REGION

A meeting of No. 10 Regional Council was held in Manchester on Wednesday, 27th, September 1944. The Chairman, Mr. MacKenzie, welcomed to the meeting the part-time member Mr. Edge, Mr. Costain, a

REGIONAL
COUNCIL
MEETING member from No. 26 Area elected in place of Mr. Blackburn who has taken up a post in Newfoundland, and Group Officer Ashton who has been co-opted as Woman Representative. At the meeting Mr. Ellis of No. 29 Area was elected to the post of Regional Legal Adviser.

Some discussion took place with reference to Officers attending the National Fire Service Selection Board, the C.R.F.O. Lieut. Commander K. N. Hoare stressing the fact that all Officers required to attend should be given ample warning. In addition, Officers selected for attending the Board should make themselves physically and mentally fit. A further point discussed was that it was considered that there should be no more reductions in rank from Officer status to other ranks. This would bring the Fire Service into line with the fighting services. The reports submitted by Area Branch Secretaries showed a gratifying increase in membership. Since the last meeting on 30th June, sixty-four new members have applied to join the Association.

Region by Region

A Meeting of the Committee of the 29 Area Branch was held at Fire Force Headquarters on Tuesday, 12th September, 1944.

Arising from a discussion on the Minutes of the National Council Meeting of the 12th July, 1944, and the Regional Council Meeting of the 30th August, 1944, it was resolved that the National Council be requested to make representations for the issue by the Service to all Officers, of four white shirts and twelve collars per annum. Failing a direct issue of these garments, a coupon equivalent to be granted, as great difficulty was experienced in obtaining these essential items of uniform.

Further to the above it was also resolved that similar representations should be made in respect of the issue of gloves, ties and socks, as it was stated that issues of these items had, previous to nationalization, been made to Officers of many Brigades.

At the Meeting Mr. Ellis was appointed to act as Area Correspondent for *The Jet*, notice of the appointment to be circulated to Divisions and Area Press Liaison Officers.

It was also resolved that Mr. Ellis be appointed to act as Area Branch Legal Adviser, and further that official approach should be made by the Committee to any legal practitioners among the personnel of the Area to ascertain whether they would be prepared to have their names placed on a panel of Accused's Friends.

The Secretary reported a most heartening increase in membership.

A Meeting of the No. 26 Area Branch was held in Liverpool on Monday, the 24th September, 1944.

Mr. Costain was elected to fill the vacancy on the Area and Regional committees caused by the appointment of No. 26 AREA BRANCH Mr. Blackburn to a post in Newfoundland. The election of an Area Correspondent for *The Jet* was carried out with the result that Mr. Birtwistle was unanimously voted to the post.

Mr. MacKenzie (Chairman of No. 10 Regional Committee) then reported on Meetings of the Regional and National Councils.

Mr. Taylor (Chairman) stated that the membership was growing rapidly, and now was the time to join so that through the medium of the Association, proposals and opinions could be carried through to the Department. It was very necessary to have a virile branch in No. 26 Area.

Some lively discussions took place under the heading 'Any Other Business' in which the Post-War Fire Service had pride of place, and it was felt that it was high time that the Government's decision on this matter was promulgated.

SCOTTISH (No. 11) REGION

A meeting of all members was held in the Central Fire Station, Glasgow, on Friday, 1st September, 1944. Mr. A. McMaster was in the Chair and 12 members were present. The Secretary reported on the

No. 1 WESTERN AREA BRANCH proceedings at the Council Meeting in London on 12th July last and gave the members the latest information about *The Jet*. The remainder of the time was spent in a general discussion about the Post-War Fire Service and the form which Area Branch Meetings should take.

The Meeting arranged to take place at Perth on 30th August was cancelled owing to the fact that a Meeting of the Institute of Fire Engineers was being held on that day, and in its stead a Meeting was held at

No. 4 EASTERN AREA BRANCH Dundee on 15th September mainly to consider the question of the Post-War Fire Service. A lively discussion ensued and a fairly comprehensive report was prepared for submission to the Regional Committee.

It was reported that Fire Force Commander Dunn, who was recently transferred to the North Eastern Area, was now associated with this Branch in view of the fact that the members of that Area had meantime formed a combined Branch with the Eastern Area.

DEMOBILIZATION

By "VOLUNTEER"

PROBABLY the outstanding thought in every Officer's mind at this present time is the effect of demobilization, and it will be of interest to many to consider the aspects of this problem. Before we can give any consideration to this matter it is essential that we form some idea as to the numbers likely to be involved and, although no figures are available, we can perhaps obtain some idea as to the numbers. Would we be right in assuming that Officers would be reduced in like proportion? The answer is, I think, "No." Other factors must be brought into our considerations; for example, we have those Officers engaged in administration, and even with the effects of centralization that number could not be reduced to much more than half. Similarly on the operational side; although substantial reductions would be practical in towns, in Rural Areas the Officer cover could not be reduced at all. Officers engaged on staff duties may well be reduced but certainly not to the extent of being reduced by threequarters. Bearing all these varying factors in mind, it would appear that the reduction of Officers may well be by one-third.

If this deduction is reasonable it would seem that the total number of Officers who will become edundant will be in the region of 1,300, and we have to consider how the smooth demobilization of this number can be effected. The first method is obviously the retirement of any Officers who are in receipt of a pension and who have been called back to active service through the exigencies of war. To this should be added other Officers who have reached their retiring age during the years of war. This might still further be extended to include any Officers who would be prepared to accept retirement with up to an additional ten years granted. It is considered that these proposals would cover quite a large number of Officers and undoubtedly make way for the introduction of younger men into senior posts in the Service. Its effect would be to re-vitalize the Fire Service at a time when it may well be needed.

Secondly, all Officers who are in a position to return to a civilian job, either by permission of the Ministry of Labour or through the Appointments Department, should be permitted to do so. The simplest way to accomplish this would be to advise all Officers that if they desire they could make application for discharge in one, two or three months so as to permit of the arrangements they would have to make. Likewise the Service would know before-hand the dates upon which such Officers would be discharged. It is believed that there are a large number of Officers who would desire to avail themselves of such a course but who hesitate to take action on their own account because they are uncertain as to their position.

Thirdly, owing to the rapid extension of the National Fire Service, it was inevitable that certain firemen were appointed to Officer ranks which they have held only with difficulty and whose qualifications

Demobilization

would obviously be inadequate for Officer rank in a peace-time Fire Service. This is a problem which must be confronted and dealt with at the same time, if not before, general mobilization takes place. It is not considered that the number so affected would be very high, but it is essential to ensure that the standard of Officer in both the Interim and Post-War Fire Service is maintained at the highest possible level.

Fourthly, on Nationalization the administrative ranks were in many cases filled by men seconded from Local Authorities and the Police. It is considered that in view of the heavy commitments facing Local Authorities, all such men who so desire should be returned where quite obviously at this stage of the war their services could be put to the greatest possible use. Similarly, those seconded from the Police should be returned. It is thought that this would be an opportunity to cease the distinction between administrative and operational Officers. In this way, many vacancies created in work of an administrative character could be filled from amongst other Officers of whom there are a large number of not inconsiderable administrative experience and ability serving in an operational capacity.

These proposals would not, of course, account for the whole of the 1,300 referred to above, but undoubtedly they would account for a very large number. Moreover, in the main they would provide for the smooth demobilization of all those of the 1905 class and above. What then is to become of the 1906 class and later? At present they are faced, after several years of service during which time their hard work, keenness and attention to duty has gained them promotion, of being drafted at a very late stage of the war into military service. At this time it is of paramount importance that the country should seek to re-establish, with all possible speed, its industry and export organizations. The maintenance of our standard of living Post War depends upon our being able to resume, at the earliest possible moment, and indeed to increase our exports to other countries. Within the ranks of the National Fire Service Officers are many with qualifications far more suited in this respect than in becoming privates in the Army. Any men, therefore, with suitable experience, notwithstanding the fact they are of the 1906 class or younger, should be permitted to resume their civil occupation.

We are then left with a residue for whom there appears to be no alternative but military service. For these there must be secured the recognition that service in the National Fire Service counts as service with the armed forces, and that those with satisfactory records should be entitled to go through the O.C.T.U.

We recognize that we do not hold the King's Commission, but we do hold responsible posts under the Crown, obtained by ability, hard work and long hours of duty. We have done our share in the protection of this country from the enemy's most dangerous weapon. Now that this danger has passed we want no thanks—but are we to go without recognition?



Part-time Officers are now represented on the National Council by Sir Eric Studd, Bt. (No. 12 Region). The second vacancy is likely to be filled at the next meeting.

* * * *

The N.F.S. March was played in Church for the first time on the occasion of the funeral of two members of the Service who were killed when a flying bomb hit their Station in Southern England.

* * * *

Applicants for the Long Course at the College will not be required to definitely commit themselves to a statement that they will continue in the Service after the war—neither will suitable Officers who do not intend to remain in the Service be pressed to attend such Courses.

* * * *

The issue of the Consolidated Regulations makes it almost certain that the N.F.S. will be debated in the House of Commons during the present Session. The position of members who are discharged on account of reorganization—and the reckoning of their Service if posted to the Armed Forces—as well as the future of the Service itself will probably be raised at the same time.

* * * *

A farming enthusiast in the Battle district has suggested that surplus fire-fighting pumps and equipment, which might otherwise be scrapped, should be used to solve the ever-recurrent water problems on farms.

* * * *

Regional and Area Branches throughout the country are to discuss the question of maintaining contact between present Members of the Association and their colleagues in the Post-War Fire Service.

Consideration will be given by the Chartered Institute of Secretaries to the reckoning of service with the National Fire Service as part of the period of qualifying service required of applicants for membership under the Byelaws of the Institute.

* * * *

The system of bank charges adopted by Scottish Banks differs from the English arrangements and it has not been possible to extend the free banking facilities to members "North of the Tweed."

* * * *

The Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act came into operation on the 1st August, 1944. It confers definite benefits on all members posted to the Service under the National Service Acts. Explanatory Memoranda are issued with the notices discharging such personnel from the Service, but members requiring information in the meantime may obtain it from Headquarters or the local office of the Ministry of Labour and National Service.

* * * *

An assurance has been requested from the Department that G.F.F.I. 16/44 will not be interpreted arbitrarily by the Stationery Office.

* * * *

A proposal by the N.F.S.A. that the two Associations should exchange ideas and information as to their activities and mutually support one another on matters of common interest has been rejected by the Council without barring informal contacts between the Secretaries of the two Associations.

* * * *

The Police Federation is asking that the question of direct Parliamentary representation for the police should be considered and that it should have its own member in the House nominated from among serving or ex-members of the Police.

REGIONAL BRANCHES

REGION	REGIONAL CHAIRMAN	REGIONAL SECRETARY	* OTHER MEMBERS OF NATIONAL COUNCIL	REGIONAL CORRESPONDENT	REGIONAL LEGAL ADVISER
I	W. H. MARDON, Esq., M.I. Fire E.	J. W. ELVIDGE, Esq.	(b) Miss A. M. MacDONALD	J. H. W. BROWN, Esq.	M. D. OUBRIDGE, Esq.
II	—	W. R. CROSS, Esq. (Acting)	—	F. TAYLOR, Esq.	—
III	C. H. WILKINSON, Esq. M.B.E., J.P.	L. WADSWORTH, Esq.	(d) A. A. I. GALLOWAY (b) MRS. M. G. BARTLETT	J. H. FRANKLIN, Esq.	C. BERESFORD DAFT, Esq.
IV	S. J. F. DAVIS, Esq.	H. W. HEPTINSTALL, Esq. M.B.E.	(a) MRS. J. HICKS	J. W. GIBSON, Esq.	—
V	A. NETHERWOOD, Esq. M.I. Fire E.	R. READER HARRIS, Esq.	(b) Miss M. E. ODDY, O.B.E.	W. T. STEVENS, Esq.	—
VI	P. G. BOULTER, Esq.	C. J. LOVERIDGE, Esq. M.I. Fire E.	—	W. R. DUFFETT, Esq.	P. G. BOULTER, Esq.
VII	J. Y. KIRKUP, Esq., M.B.E.	J. HURST, Esq.	(a) A. E. KAY, Esq. F.C.C.S.	E. T. J. ISAACS, Esq.	E. F. WINDEATT, Esq.
VIII	J. W. H. STRANGE, Esq. Grad.I. Fire E.	H. D. REYNOLDS, Esq.	—	W. J. H. PATON, Esq.	—
IX	H. R. LUCAS, Esq.	S. E. SQUIRES, Esq.		E. C. M. BROWN, Esq.	J. J. WILD, Esq.
X	J. MACKENZIE, Esq. G.M., M.I. Fire E.	N. PORTER, Esq. A.C.I.S.	—	H. ROBERTS, Esq.	H. S. ELLIS, Esq.
XI	A. S. PRATTEN, Esq. M.I. Fire E.	G. M. BOYD, Esq.	—	R. F. BRAID, Esq.	—
XII	C. BIRCH, Esq., O.B.E.	J. K. BUTLER, Esq.	(b) MRS. M. D. E. SWAN (c) SIR ERIC STUDD, Bt.	R. SMITH, Esq.	L. J. D. BUNKER, Esq.

*The Council comprises The Officers of the Association, two Representatives of each Region and a number of co-opted and elected members

- (a) Co-opted under Rule 9 (a) (i).
- (b) Elected under Rule 9 (a) (ii) to represent Women Members.
- (c) Co-opted under Rule 9 (a) (iii) to represent Part-time Members.
- (d) Elected under Rule 9 (a) (i) to represent Region III with the Regional Chairman; in all other cases the Regional Chairman and the Regional Secretary are the Regional Representatives,

THE NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE AND THE PRESS

Need for Fostering Closer Liaison

The relationship between the National Fire Service and the Press has given rise from time to time to considerable discussion amongst the rank and file of the Service.

So far the treatment has been "fair" where the National Press is concerned and "very poor" in the provincial publications. It is no use mincing matters—in the handling of publicity (of the right kind) the Service has failed woefully.

By this, I do not infer glamorizing the Service, but rather giving the general public, through the medium of the Press, a true perspective of what the Service stands for, what it can accomplish, and how nationalization — a bone of bitter contention — has made it possible to give the public far better attention in the matter of fire protection.

Where the Fault Lies

In the past, quite a lot of what has appeared in the Press has certainly not shown the Fire Service in a favourable light. Because it has appeared in the Press, the public has, as it is something it does not understand, accepted it as the truth. The public is fickle and, as it often only believes the Press when that course suits, it is little wonder that the National Fire Service has never been what one might term a "prime" favourite. The fault lies with the Service itself, for it has never gone out of its way to ensure correct publicity and present itself in its true colours, and because the public is not enamoured of the Service, for once it believes newspaper talk. Further, it is universally agreed that the Press moulds public opinion by sheer reiteration and, if the Press is consistently, only slightly, adverse in its comments, then public opinion will distort the facts even more.

The Fire Service is, of a necessity, under the public eye every minute of the day. Men can be seen standing around station yards and stations, carrying out what appear to be futile duties, taking part in large-scale exercises which, to the public eye, appear equally unnecessary. How many times have we heard the expressions "Waste of Petrol" and "Waste of Manpower"? And all because they do not understand. Nobody has ever taken the trouble to explain in print, the only possible means of conveying such information to the public, what the men are doing on stations and why exercises are necessary. Other Services publicise their activities—they have a public relations branch which sees to it that the public is always made aware of the various phases of its work through the medium of the Press. Why not the National Fire Service?

Fostering Liaison

The root of the trouble lies with the junior officer—the Company Officer in charge of a Station or a Sub-Division. They make no effort



The N.F.S. and the Press

to foster liaison, and are very reluctant to give newspapermen information. Admittedly, they are tied to some extent by "red tape" and National Fire Service Instructions, but there are a thousand and one ways in which they could help the Press without contravening any instruction, and thus going a long way towards getting fair comment. A reporter is told to write a story of the National Fire Service. His only source of information should be a National Fire Service Officer, but how often can he get information from that source, because the officer is either afraid to or won't talk.

Anyone who understands journalism will know that the reporter will get the story somehow, and, even though he makes every endeavour to ensure that it is factually correct, if he does not get the right angle, the story conveys the wrong impression. He wants his story genuine; he has an inherent desire to please everyone, but, equally so, if he cannot get his information from one source, he is going to get it from another, and, nine times out of ten, it will be from someone not kindly disposed towards the Fire Service.

Distorted Stories

For instance, on how many occasions have there been complaints in the Press that the Fire Service is late in turning up to a fire. If the reporter had interviewed and obtained information from an N.F.S. Officer, a different story might have been written, but, because the officer was either nervous of passing on information, or simply had not the inclination, a distorted story was conveyed to the public. This has actually happened on numerous occasions, and it has always reacted to the discredit of the Service. Again, it must be realized that the reporter wants his news "hot." He may appear to be a darned nuisance, worrying for particulars immediately after, or even during a fire, or when a Company Officer happens to be busy with his multitudinous forms. A few minutes spent with him, however, will ensure that he gets his facts correct, and the publication of a story that will do credit to the Service. A bad Press is a thing to be avoided by anyone, particularly a public service, and, in our case, one that is growing up. For, once given a bad name, or any inference that might lead to doubt, it will be tainted for years.

I feel there are only two things to be done to ensure publicity which will make the public realize that the National Fire Service has not lost, but gained in efficiency.

What Information is Permitted

Firstly, junior officers must appreciate what information they are permitted to give to the Press. National Fire Service Instruction No. 28/1942 outlines this, and any reporter receiving such information would go away delighted and with all the material he desired for a first-class story. If Officers have a pride of service, they will do this.

Secondly, it is up to every member of the Service, of whatever rank, to encourage a closer liaison with the local Press. This is most important. It will be found that reporters are more than willing to meet anyone half-way, particularly when they know that another news source, and a reliable one, is open to them. Once that liaison is established, and the mutual feeling between the two of desiring to serve the public is created, then we shall be able to educate the public through the Press on what the National Fire Service actually stands for.

—L.A.T.

Topical VIEWS

By "AEDILE"

From all parts of the country reports have been received that members are clamouring for a Government Statement on the Post-War set-up of the Service, or for more definite knowledge on the question of Demobilization. Such anxiety is easy to understand, but I suggest that an examination of the other side of the picture explains the position quite easily.

As I write the Government have just published their Social Insurance and Workmen's Compensation plans; the Houses of Parliament have just resumed their sittings and will soon be tackling Housing and Town Planning problems. When these have been disposed of there will be Currency and Foreign Trade, the restoration of Industry, the reorganization of Local Government and the new Health Plan to be tackled—all of them national problems affecting every citizen in the country. The War in Europe is not yet over—and that against Japan has hardly begun—Parliament will probably try and find time to tackle the preliminary legislation in connection with some of the Services and problems I have mentioned, but what are the prospects of legislation dealing with our (relatively small) Service? Is it a really urgent problem—must it be given first priority amongst Post-War Reconstruction, or can we be patient, safe in the knowledge that the personal interests of those vitally concerned have been, and will be preserved?

For those about to be demobilized the picture is not so clear. The Government Points Plan has been published only to be followed the next day by an announcement that it did not apply to the N.F.S. As an answer to the Association's plea for segregation from the General Civil Defence Services it is a good sign—but it still leaves the other problem unsettled.

It is to be hoped that the Minister of Labour and National Service will remember that it was Government policy that froze a number of volunteers into the Fire Service—and this has always been considered to be "war service" and must therefore count in the final Demobilization Points Plan. No one will quarrel with the redistribution of the manpower of the country according to the demands of the war situation, but we must also see that the democratic rights of individual citizens of this country are used if there is unfair treatment as between one individual and another, or if skill and knowledge are ignored.

CONSULTATION

Following my reference in the last issue to the value of consultations between the Government and interested bodies before legislation dealing with Post-War Reconstruction measures is laid before Parliament, Mr. Herbert Morrison made some interesting observations at the first meeting of the Advisory Council on the Treatment of Offenders.

"In shaping and carrying out a big programme of reform, it is not a good thing that the Home Secretary and his Officers should work in isolation", he said and, continuing, "I am anxious that our departmental ideas shall be broadened, humanized and improved by discussions with, and suggestions from, men and women who will look at the subject from various angles and contribute ideas based on experience in various spheres of work."

AN ANALOGY!

Three eminent strategists—Lord Trenchard, Admiral Sir William James and Lord Brabazon of Tara—as well as others, have been exchanging views on the post-war set up of the Fighting Services of this country. One suggestion is that we should have "one service instead of three, which is the logical and inevitable conclusion from an efficiency and economic point of view."

From this suggestion I draw an analogy with the Home Defence Services—all controlled by one Minister, the Home Secretary—viz.: the Police, Fire, Probation, Prison and Safety-in-Factories Services. They, and the Ambulance Service, all have a common objective—the safety of life and property from destruction; why then should they be organized in so many different ways? Some of them are wholly National Services, in other cases the cost is partly borne by the State, whilst the Local Authority Services are organized by different types of Authorities.

Is it too early to advocate that all the Services controlled by the Home Secretary—which must, of necessity be National Services because life exists without territorial boundaries—should be uniform and that the incidence of cost should be fairly borne throughout the country?

"REDUNDANT" or "SUPERNUMARY"?

A member of Parliament writing to *The Times* in connection with the promotion of Field-Marshal Montgomery referred to the unfortunate use of the expression "supernumary" which, he said, had many miserable associations, especially in the Services. After referring to the thousands of people in the Civil Service who lived on tenterhooks through being unappointed or "unestablished", he continued—"they are temporary, non-pensionable, and subject to dismissal at any time, except those who are called 'permanent temporaries.'" In the theatrical world supernumeraries are merely called "supers" and generally serve as speechless make-weights."

Whilst everyone will agree that the Field-Marshal should never have been included in this category, I call attention to the opinion of the popular world to this word, which has also been used unfortunately in relation to a number of Officers who gave their best in setting up and administering the N.F.S. only to be told two years later that through no fault of their own they could have the alternative of discharge or reduction in rank.



FREE KICK

A colonel in the Home Guard received a severe kick a tergo from the sergeant who opened the door of his car for him. A private, who was passing by, promptly followed suit.

At the subsequent court-martial the sergeant pleaded that the colonel had stepped down on his pet corn, and that he had lost control of himself.

The private, in his turn, explained that, on seeing the sergeant's action, he naturally thought that the war was over.

PETERBOROUGH, of *The Daily Telegraph*.

AN N.F.S. OFFICER ON MILITARY LIAISON

IN genesis and design the National Fire Service was a defensive arm, and perhaps not even those who planned and carried out the great reorganization of August 1941 could then have foreseen that it would in time be called upon to assist in the mounting of the greatest offensive in military history.

It is no longer a secret that months before "D Day" the fantastically complicated military machinery necessary for the concentration, marshalling and embarkation of the men and material required for an invasion was set up over a large area of Southern England. The nerve centres of this organization were the Marshalling Area Headquarters at which under British and U.S. or joint command worked representatives of every military branch concerned in the organization, accommodation, supply and movement of vast numbers of men and vehicles. It was decided to appoint an N.F.S. Officer to the staff of certain Marshalling Area Commanders for liaison duties; the writer was one of these who worked with a Military and Civil Liaison Officer and even more closely with the Staff Officer P.A.D. & Fire. His duty was to communicate to the local N.F.S. officers the particular needs, permanent and occasional, of the military, to report on what steps were being taken to satisfy these needs, to acquaint the military in turn with any matter which might help or hamper the N.F.S. in carrying out its part of the job, and to advise on fire prevention, the provision and maintenance of military fire appliances and a host of other points not large in themselves but amounting in all to a very complete co-operation.

That was the job as explained to the newly appointed "L.O."; what became apparent almost immediately was that it involved living a new life with new values and almost a new language. The first few weeks were strange indeed to an officer transferred to the South of England from the "brown" country in which the war had been only the subject matter of press and radio reports. In his new surroundings it was the only thing that had any reality. He learned gradually what these officers with strange titles were doing—D.A.D.O.S., M.A.R.A.S.C.O., D.A.D.M.E.—and what was the difference between T.P. and S.P. and what R.C.R.P. meant. He learnt by a series of shocks that the innocent sounding "Admin. Installation" might mean anything from an acre or so of cased petrol to a supply dump beside which a fair-sized departmental store looked like a village corner shop, and which of all these was a C.S.D., Q.M.D.P., D.I.D. or E.S.D., and so on. But out of the apparent chaos of initials and abbreviations, secret instructions and confidential maps, "study periods" and conferences, one thing began to emerge clearly: somebody, somewhere, at what cost in time and effort defied calculation, had evolved a gigantic plan complete down to the last detail but elastic enough to recover from anything short of total dislocation by enemy attack, and that here was a group of men, British and American, whose lives for the time being were dedicated to making it work.

An N.F.S. Officer on Military Liaison

They served a god, these men, whose name was "movement"; once the time came and "The Operation" had begun, nothing man or devil could devise would be allowed to interrupt that steady, organized, methodical progress of men, guns and vehicles and stores, for missing a tide might mean missing a victory. The N.F.S. was a part of all this; youngest of the Services as it was, it had its share in these preparations and best of all it was never doubted that if called upon it would do its job. As a fire officer, perhaps the writer's proudest memory is of a remark made by a Garrison Commander during an address at a military conference: "Fire is the least of my worries—the N.F.S. will look after that."

Some incidents stand out in recollection, many of them slight enough as though the mind boggles at the great things and seizes happily at the less. A fire in a plantation, for example, so large and so impenetrable that at midnight military assistance was requested; in an hour or two what appeared to be a regiment of coloured U.S. troops arrived with bulldozers and set about cutting lanes and fire breaks with such abandon that by the morning the plantation looked like a street plan of Manhattan. One N.F.S. officer was seen hanging grimly on to a heaving bulldozer while a diminutive dusky driver grinned comfortingly at him and said "O.K. sir. You ain't going no place." Or one of the biggest convoys that went through, a mixture of heavy tanks and enormous almost unrecognizable engineering appliances, with, at the tail, a single jeep drawing a tiny trailer just big enough to hold what appeared to be a 4½-gallon barrel of beer, although it may not have been. Or nights spent in the control room watching the progress of "divers" being plotted until they passed overhead, wondering why the A.A. batteries always selected just that moment to open up; that control room had a miraculous door which always rattled when a "Doodle Bug" crashed but paid no attention at all to explosions of other varieties. Or that very senior N.F.S. officer at a P.O.L. fire who did not notice that a slit trench had become filled with foam. Other memories there are too, not so trivial; the queer, quiet grace of lines of "ducks" on the move; the macabre beauty of convoys of tanks rumbling at high speed along the tree-lined routes, lit only by their own head lamps, and the mixed emotions on the faces of people watching truck-load after truck-load of singing troops on the last stage of their journey, some of them veterans of two campaigns already.

The final, the strongest impression, with anyone who had a part in these events was this: Here at last was an army of the free peoples, disciplined without being driven and trained without being terrorized, controlled and commanded by men who had nothing to learn from any dictator about the organization of war and better equipped than any army before them. The N.F.S. officers engaged in these operations, in however small a way, living and working as they did with the military in their offices, their messes and camps, must also carry away another, more private conviction: that the N.F.S. is a Service in fact as well as in name and when need arose it was accepted as such by other, older Services.

LITTLE TOMMY TUCKER

Sings for his Supper

THIS is no fairy tale, or toddler's rhyme, e'en though it may sound strange and untrue to life. This really happened and started nearly two years ago—or maybe I had better take you back further still and dive into the records of the labours of the legislators of four years ago.



It was then decreed by a certain Minister of State invested with the necessary powers that in return for their services a number of mortals should be rewarded with certain coins of the realm. In some cases the quantity was publicly declared beforehand, whilst in others it was left to be prescribed "from time to time."

Now if the basis and the relationship between the various artificers had been left undisturbed this story would not have been written—but then, I let you learn for yourself. 'Twas in January in the year one thousand nine hundred and forty three that a certain Council well known to you all were apprised of anomalies created by recent variations in the rewards to be paid to certain mortals, whilst the others (for some unknown reason) were deemed to be unaffected by the causes justifying such changes. It appeared on enquiry that the difference in the value of the services of a certain class styled "Company Officers" and another class called "Section Leaders" which had been fixed at £50 was reduced to £19.

This appeared inequitable and incomprehensible, and the negotiators got to work. By the first day of the next month but one a certain adjustment had been made, but still the original difference between the two classes—based upon estimates of their responsibilities and values—differed from the original figure of £50. It was now £44. And so a body of men called a Deputation raised the matter at Headquarters on the 20th day of August, only to be told on the 15th day of October that no alteration could be made.

But we must not run too fast because another thing we are forgetting is that ladies are indispensable to any fairy story or fantasy. 'Twas on the 1st of August that they decided to create a new class of female mortal and to add it to those originally conceived, and at the same time (without a formal request) the rewards of the other higher mortals of the same sex were "adjusted" so as to upset the relationship between the previously comparable ranks of the two sexes.

News of the additional rewards granted to fellow mortals gradually spread throughout the land and out of rumblings in the south-west came cries for action and fair play for those who had been forgotten. As they pointed out, all ranks below Column Officer on the one side, and all Officer ranks on the other side, as well as their counterparts in sister- and allied-Services had received assistance in meeting additional burdens cast upon the community since their meagre rewards were originally assessed. Furthermore, that whilst it was a general practice in the profession to increase individual utility and efficiency year by year as a result of experience, and to recognize this fact with annual

Little Tommy Tucker

increments, such was not the case with their present Masters.

But this demand had to be merged later in a general demand for an all-round review of the measures of reward for all Officer classes, based on precedents established in other Services and the reduced purchasing power of the unit adopted for the reward.

To some extent this was met on the first day of July one thousand nine hundred and forty three, approximately six months after the grievance was apparent. Further anomalies were created through unequal treatment as between the different classes and sexes of mortals, and although affected by the same factors as their fellow-mortals, some Seniors received one payment only instead of a continuing reward for continuing services, whilst others received no increase at all. There were also differing opinions between the mortals and their Masters as to the date from which these increased rewards should operate, and on the exclusion of the female of the species.

We can rest assured that Tommie will continue to sing lustily for his supper—or is it his Bread and Butter?—and we must leave our story there for the moment, well knowing that it will be resumed (and, we hope, concluded) in the not too distant future.—T.T.

“ PERFECT ”

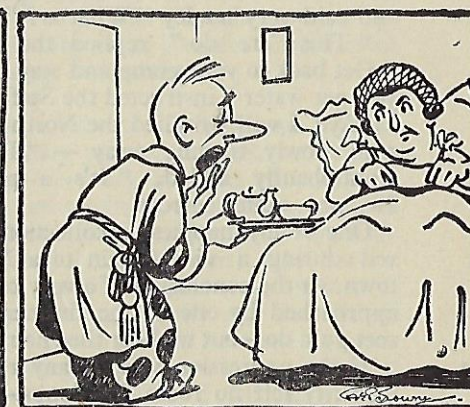
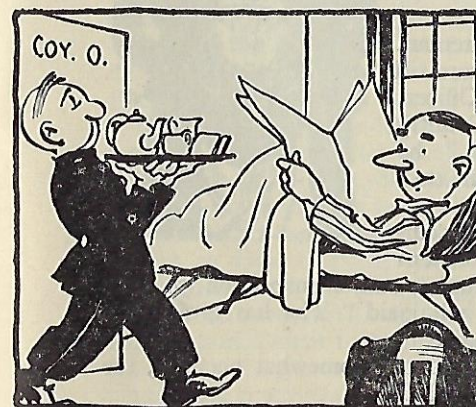
Teacher : Six times eight ?

Boy : Forty-eight.

Teacher : Good.

Boy : Good be damned, It's perfect !

ON AND OFF



THE INSPECTORATE ARE COMING!

IN response to a request and with the hope that this brief outline will introduce a subject which may lead to a diversity of opinion, I propose to run over the general principle which is followed when a team from the Central Inspectorate visits a Fire Force.

The Inspection is designed to test the operational efficiency of the Force, and accordingly the various drills and evolutions have been carefully considered in order to maintain these on the most practical lines.

Test turnouts, general station drills, night calls and "over-the-border" assistance arrangements are tested, none of which should give rise to a feeling of artificiality but are, in fact, day-to-day occurrences.

There is, of course, a difficulty in outlining a hypothetical fire situation to the complete satisfaction of the officer in charge of the first appliance to arrive, and some imagination is essential. This, I think, is one aspect where such exercises often "fall down", and this is a good opportunity to emphasize the point that officers have every right to query the "picture" or to ask for clarification if the Inspector fails to make himself clear.

Station routines and drills are given particular attention and it is usual to visit at least one whole-time and one part-time station during the inspection. Test turnouts, night calls, "over-the-border" arrangements and water relaying are, I assume, familiar to all and require no explanation and a study of Operations and Training Notes No. 25/1944 will help to put right certain features which, in the past, have been found in need of attention.

Perfection is seldom met in this, or any other sphere of life, although the ideal is of course the ultimate objective.

On one occasion, a water relay had not been going too well and tempers were a little frayed. The pump operator, who was somewhat "browned off", followed behind us repeating "E—It's a puir do." After a few minutes the Staff Officer turned round and said very tersely "What is?"

"This 'ere do" replied the fireman. "Get back to your pump and stay there till you get water" instructed the Staff Officer.

"Aye, I will" replied the North Country man slowly turning away — "But," he triumphantly added, "It's a puir do." He was quite correct.

One of my happiest recollections occurred during a visit—again to a Northern town. At the conclusion of a very complete station inspection we were approached by one of the firemen, who said "Tha has given us a reet guid do—but we bear thee no malice."

If the expression was, at any rate to me, somewhat peculiar, the sincerity left no room for doubt.—A.N.O.



THE DISCIPLINE CODE

SOME CRITICISMS AND SOME ANSWERS

By A. R. TRIMMING

AMONG National Fire Service Officers the Discipline Code is inevitably a frequent subject of discussion, and criticisms (not always veiled) can occasionally be heard regarding the procedure and other aspects of the Code. Some of these criticisms may be justified, but there are one or two points which are not fully appreciated and which an Officer with legal qualifications feels tempted to try to elucidate.

TOO ELABORATE?

A comment most frequently heard in connection with the Code is that it is unnecessarily elaborate for trivial offences and that it resembles too closely a formal trial in a Court of Law. The writer does not profess to have any knowledge of the procedure in other Services, but viewing the matter purely from the Fire Service angle, it is felt that this particular criticism is not justified, principally for two reasons.

In the first place the proceedings are not elaborate by comparison with even the simplest proceedings in a Court of Law and the preliminary steps which have to be taken before a case is actually heard are particularly simple in spite of the great length to which National Fire Service Instruction No. 53/1942 goes to explain them. In actual practice the preparation of a disciplinary report form and the subsequent issue and service of a charge sheet are steps upon which for simplicity and brevity it would be difficult to improve. The proceedings themselves need not be unduly complicated and only conform in a very general way with the procedure in a Police or Magistrate's Court. The rules of evidence are followed as closely as possible but the procedure is in no way stereotyped and almost the only thing that must not be done is to ignore the principles of natural justice.

Secondly, the Code provides for the investigation of serious offences and empowers a Presiding Officer of the rank of Fire Force Commander to impose severe penalties, including dismissal from the Service. For dealing with these cases anything more informal (if such can be imagined) than the procedure at present adopted at National Fire Service disciplinary hearings, would be highly undesirable.

SHORT CUTS IN PROCEDURE

If there are any grounds for complaint that the Code appears to make somewhat heavy weather of disciplinary proceedings, this can surely only be so in the case of ordinary every-day breaches of discipline which in other Services and institutions might be dealt with in a much more summary manner. This objection, however, can have very little weight in view of paragraphs 5a and 16 of National Fire Service Instruction 53/1942. The first provides for a case being disposed of without recourse to disciplinary proceedings at all and the second enables punishment to be inflicted without an oral hearing—in cases where the charges are admitted. Paragraph 16 would repay careful study since it expressly safeguards a member of the Service accused of

The Discipline Code

a serious offence while opening the way to a practical and expeditious method of administering justice in less serious cases.

Another short cut in procedure which is mentioned in paragraph 15 of the Instruction is the obvious one of disposing of a case by accepting the accused's explanation.

From the above it will be apparent that only in those cases where there is a matter of some importance and complicity to be investigated, need proceedings lasting more than about five minutes ever take place, and it is therefore very difficult to sustain the objection that the Discipline Code is unnecessarily elaborate or involved.

PUNISHMENT FALLS ON OFFICERS.

Another frequent complaint against the Code is that in practically every case the proceedings from commencement to final confirmation and promulgation of the award imposes a far greater hardship on the Officers concerned with presenting the case and arranging the hearing, to say nothing of the Presiding Officer, than upon the accused himself. This is an objection which it is indeed by no means easy to answer and unless a much more severe scale of punishment is to be provided, it is difficult to see how this state of affairs can be avoided. A strict adherence to the various instructions relating to the Code and in particular to National Fire Service Instruction 53/42 would undoubtedly reduce considerably the labours involved.

Some of the difficulties which occur are unavoidable having regard to the conditions of service obtaining in the National Fire Service, including the watch system and the system of Officers' leave, which present a formidable problem to the Administrative Officer trying to fix a date for the hearing of a charge. It frequently happens that when the accused is on duty, the Officer who is to present the case is on leave and often some of the witnesses are sick or attending courses; the other participants, such as the Area Legal Officer or the accused's friend, may have appointments which prevent the case from being heard on the date originally selected. This is only one of the many difficulties arising but under existing conditions this is quite unavoidable. The only consolation is that these complications do not all descend upon one head. A varied assortment of Officers and other staff are concerned in the hearing and arranging of a case, provision having to be made for a shorthand-typist and an usher, etc.

IS MORE THAN ONE FORM NECESSARY?

Notwithstanding a very considerable amount of labour involved, the actual paper work connected with a Discipline Case is remarkably limited and as a general rule three quite simple forms are all that is required. It can be argued that the K.317 form is not really necessary, thus reducing the forms to two, apart of course from the accused's copy of the charge sheet. Incidentally, it is believed that no member of the Service has yet completely solved the problem of how to fill in the opening portion of K.314 correctly; nor, as far as the writer is aware, has anyone yet bothered to question the various methods of doing this which are from time to time employed. The K.314 itself is undoubtedly a form which is not strictly necessary, though some form of report has of course to be prepared in every case. Perhaps the best reply to

The Discipline Code

the two criticisms to which reference has been made would be to ask the critics if they can devise a simpler and shorter method of enforcing discipline without injustice, and without involving the Officers of the Service (whose responsibility it is, after all, to maintain discipline and at the same time to avoid breaches of it) in the considerable amounts of clerical and administrative work which at present has to be done. Possibly some set scale of punishments for minor offences could be devised, and provision made on lines adopted in America for the automatic imposition of punishments in the event of such offences being committed. This would only be appropriate in simple and comparatively unimportant cases, and there would have to be a right of appeal which could only be enforced subject to safeguards no less complicated than those appearing in the Second Schedule of the National Fire Service (General) Regulations, 1941 which, as amended, contain the National Fire Service Code of Discipline.

In conclusion, it may perhaps serve as some defence of the Code as it exists to point out that it follows very closely indeed the terms of the Codes which applied to the A.F.S. in London and in the Provinces prior to nationalization. This at any rate should dispose of the somewhat prevalent idea that the Discipline Code had its origins in the National Fire Service and inherited its peculiar characteristics as a result of this association.

N.F.S. TERMS

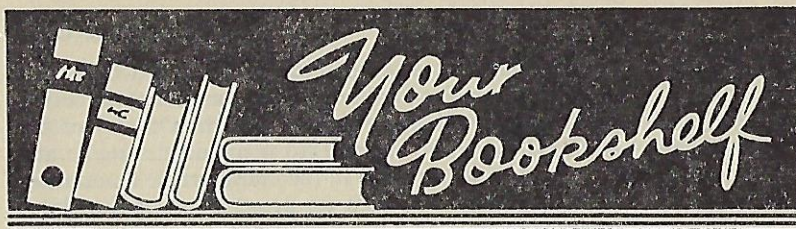
No. 2



SEPARATION

A Bristol firm has received a Government form which reads: "Separate departments in the same premises are treated as separate premises for this purpose where separate branches of work which are commonly carried on as separate businesses in separate premises are carried on in separate departments on the same premises."

—Bristol Evening Post



FIRE AND WATER—A NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ANTHOLOGY—

Lindsay Drummond. 7/6.

However vivid the event, time inevitably blurs the edge of memory and details that once seemed indelibly imprinted on the mind fade and are forgotten. For those who take pleasure in recalling their early days in the A.F.S., *Fire and Water*, compiled by H. S. Ingham, B.E.M., will awake many half-forgotten memories of a period when a motley collection of volunteers with little in common save an unbounded eagerness to put out fires, trained and waited impatiently until the blitz engulfed them, passed over them, and left in its wake the experienced self-reliant body that became in August, 1941, the National Fire Service.

With somewhat illogical surprise, one learns that the National Fire Service numbers among its ranks such well-known literary figures as Stephen Spender, who contributes the only poem in the collection, Philip Henderson, Peter Blackmore, William Sanson and Maurice Richardson. All these and others, many of them ex-journalists, bring back memories of the Fire Service during the first three years of the war. "Proto" tells of the *Massey Shaw's* part in the evacuation of Dunkirk; Philip Corey relates his experiences as a fireman in Finland after the Russo-Finnish War; James Gordon describes vividly the Thameshaven oil fire, while Maurice Richardson contributes a delightfully-humorous account of a training school in 1939.

Authenticity is the keynote throughout, and in this anthology every fireman will find some part of himself and of his life in the Fire Service. It is all here—the humour and comradeship of men living and working together, the often witty, sometimes uncouth back-chat; the thrill and terror of the blitz—real people and true situations as seen by the trained eye of the professional writer. The book is admirably and plentifully illustrated in black and white by Paul Dessau, Stanley Froude and Leonard Rosoman.

The contributions are by Londoners and with few exceptions feature the L.F.B. and the London raids. Has no worth-while Fire Service literature come out of blitzed Plymouth, Coventry, Bristol, Hull, Swansea or Clydeside?

—N. H.

HANDBOOK OF FIRE PROTECTION

Crosby—Fiske—Forster

With the imminent removal of the greatest fire hazard of all time—incendiary attack scientifically planned to exact the maximum in damage by fire—the focus of attention reverts to industrial fire protection. Dare one hope that a national standard will be evolved in Great Britain to economically and scientifically combat the huge wastage by fire of industrial effort and output? Proof of the fact that almost perfect fire protection is possible is to be found in the fire records of many industrial plants in the U.S.A. From 1930 to 1939 inclusive the average annual direct fire loss amounted to about £65,000,000. Over the 25 years from 1914 to 1939 the annual direct fire loss rose from £45,000,000 to a peak of £114,000,000 in 1926 and in 1939 dropped to £56,000,000.

The evolution of the official standards of Fire Protection in the U.S.A. and a presentation in compact form of the essential information on fire prevention and fire protection that time has crystallized into good practice, is to be found in the 1941 9th edition of the Crosby-Fiske-Forster *Handbook of Fire Protection*. The edition is a publication of the National Fire Protection

For Your Bookshelf

Association of America, revising completely the previous edition published in 1936. With a wealth of detail the numerous new developments in the field of fire protection are expounded, and the whole text running into some 1,300 pages is presented as the best available data on the subject.

However diverse they may have been hitherto, post-war industrial standards and processes in this country can be expected to have much in common with their counterparts in the U.S.A. The application of science to fire protection has become a national asset in the one case, but is a dubious experiment in the other.

The true appreciation of this masterpiece of compilation cannot be set out in so many words, but when a parallel organization in this country can promote anything approaching the completeness of this treatise, and related to British standards and hazards, fire protection here will have assuredly reached its deserved eminence as a profession.

—M.C.D.

Fire Service Books in "THE GREAT NATIONAL SERVICES" and "THE PAGEANT OF PROGRESS" Series

The Oxford University Press are publishing a "Great National Services" series of books (price 5/- net) and have already issued *His Majesty's Mails* by G. A. Campbell, *Our Merchant Navy* by Sidney Howard, *Round the Year on the Farm* by A. G. Street, and *Our Police Force* by G. A. Campbell.

The Fire Service is to be described by John Anderson in a book entitled *Our Fire Fighters* which is not likely to be ready until the early part of next year. In the meantime *The Fire Service Today* by Frank Eyre and E. C. R. Hadfield, intended for older readers, is being published in "The Pageant of Progress" series. It is expected to be ready at the end of October, price 3/- net.

—T.K.

THE EQUAL CITIZENSHIP (BLANKET) BILL

Advocates of sex equality should read this pamphlet published by the Women's Planning Publicity Committee, 14 Dartmouth Street, London, S.W.1., price 1/6. It contains details of 30 Acts of Parliament in which Britain has one law for men and another for women.

—A.O.

THE LONDON REGION BOOKSHOP

The need of students attending the London Officers' Training School for personal copies of technical books not easily obtainable from booksellers led to the establishment of a bookshop at the School. The popularity of the venture was ensured from the outset and it grew and grew; it reached such proportions, in fact, that when training at the School ceased other accommodation was found to prevent the disaster which would have ensued had the bookshop been closed as well.

The bookshop is now located at Regional Headquarters and visits were recently made by members of the Council and Regional Correspondents of this Journal. The visitors were quickly absorbed in close study of the publications on view and several purchases were made. To cater for the needs of members who were unable to keep in personal touch with the shop, a Book Club has been established and membership has been extended to all members of the Service throughout the country. A remittance for the moderate sum of 3d. sent to the Secretary, London Region Book Club, Rooms 801/2, Regional Fire Headquarters, Albert Embankment, London, S.E.1., together with the applicant's N.F.S. number and rank, name and station is all that is required to obtain lists of the current stock of over 5,000 books and pamphlets comprising 350 titles on fire-fighting and kindred subjects. Periodic news-sheets are circulated, and facilities are provided for advance ordering of forthcoming publications and obtaining books in short supply.

—C.C.

GOOD WORK AT A CONTROL POINT

A FEW weeks ago you may have read in the national press a brief report of an air accident in which fourteen American airmen and two civilians lost their lives. Here is the story with more detail, although for obvious reasons names of places and individuals are not given.

It opens with a considerable number of U.S. four-engined bombers, loaded up and *en route* for the Continent, when by some mishap two of them collided at a great height. According to eye witnesses, there was an explosion immediately following the collision and the air was filled with hundreds of small pieces of metal that glittered in the bright sunlight as they fell—scattered over a wide area. The main parts crashed with a loud explosion which was heard many miles away.

National Fire Service units and Civil Defence Services from surrounding towns and villages moved out immediately without waiting to be called, heading towards a column of black smoke which could be seen rising in the distance. The accident, tragic as it was, fortunately occurred in a rural district, the nearest village being about a mile away, and only a few cottages, a farmhouse or two, and a public house were in the vicinity. These were damaged by blast. Two M.D.U's were the first fire appliances at the scene and the officer in charge quickly set these to work and requested the attendance to be made up.

Meantime, a Control Point was established in the lane leading to, and midway between where fires were burning, and a telephone situated at the public house, the name of which was circulated to all Services as a rendezvous point. This was a very necessary measure in view of the scattered nature of the incident. A general survey of the scene showed six fields and three small woods in which there were four small fires, including one haystack, several craters where bombs had exploded, debris everywhere, exploding ammunition and here and there unexploded bombs partly buried in the earth, and the bodies of the fourteen unfortunate airmen. The two civilians were killed by a bomb which fell through the roof of a cottage without exploding. It was decided at the Control Point to draw a blackboard sketch of the scene, which proved invaluable as the situation built up, and with the aid of this and a small mobilizing board it was possible to maintain a picture throughout the subsequent operations. In addition to the N.F.S. attending, all Services reported to the Control Point, and were given such information as they required of whereabouts of bodies, U.X.B's, etc., and as anything was moved this information was passed to the Control Point by the Service concerned. U.S.A.A.F. Officers attending required to know quickly the number of bodies, as the crews are understood to vary according to which station they are attached and what operation they are on. It was possible to give this and their whereabouts by reference to the sketch. B.D.S. personnel copied the sketch showing the whereabouts of U.X.B's and in what manner their location had been marked. This was especially helpful as there was a consider-

Good Work at a Control Point

able number of such bombs in the vicinity. Senior officials calling at the Control Point were given an up-to-the-minute picture of the incident, and all expressed their approval of the arrangement.

In this type of incident, where operations by personnel of several Services are in progress, the Control Point is undoubtedly of paramount importance. It is possible to check from time to time as to whether details have received the necessary attention, and the work of all Services can be co-ordinated. The sketch of the scene of operations can be used afterwards for training purposes, junior officers being invited to state how they would tackle such a situation.—W.J.M.

STEPPING STONES

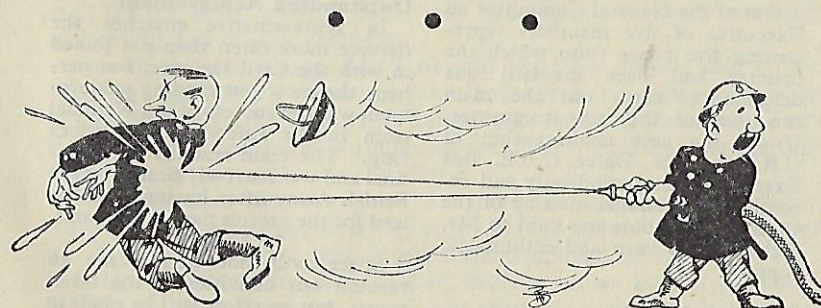
When considering all the processes which an individual has to pass through before being regarded as efficient and worthy of promotion to higher rank, it is perhaps a good idea to cast an eye back to other days. The Police system included examinations in educational subjects and police duties, as well as the completion of four years' service, but promotion was exceptional before completing five years' service. The Constable who had passed these examinations and fulfilled the other requirements had to wait for a vacancy. He could not sit for the Sergeant's examination. If he failed he could sit at the next examination, perhaps two years away. The dates of examinations varied between the Forces—some were held every three months while in other Forces they were held each two years.

If he was promoted, after twelve months as a sergeant he could sit for the next examination and attend the same classes as the constables, for training in the same subjects as before. His examination would be no more advanced than that of the constables. Having passed the educational tests, he could then attend the next police duties classes (up to two years later) and cover exactly the same ground as for his first examination. Each Force had its own standards for training, examination and marking.

All this, for a fireman constable and a fireman sergeant to qualify for promotion in the fire service—without any instructional classes or tests of any kind even remotely connected with fire fighting. This obtained in quite large brigades, although there were Police brigades where the Police law examination was not applied to firemen, but was substituted by tests on fire brigade work. There were others where an external result (e.g. I.F.E.) was accepted and some where external examinations were not in any way recognized.

When looking at future development, it is sometimes wise to look over your shoulder and see how far you have already travelled.

W. R. C.



JET PROPULSION

SPORTING *Chatter*

By "OLD GUARD"

As a war time Service we have endeavoured to take our place in the world of sport. Although we have not figured in the limelight quite so much as the Fighting Forces, I think it will be generally conceded on looking back over the last few years that our record is one of which we can well be proud. London Fire Force gave a fine lead in the early days and built up a splendid reputation in the various branches of sport, particularly in cricket and football. This was largely due to the fact that in their ranks they were fortunate in having well-known players, backed up by unbounded enthusiasm and sound organization.

Organized Sport

Then in June 1943—rather belated perhaps—a National Fire Service Sports Committee was set up, each Region being represented. The objects of this Committee were to organize sport on a national scale and provide machinery whereby Regions could co-operate with one another in the promotion of sports events; also to co-operate with other National Sports bodies in selecting representative Civil Defence teams.

Five Zones

Out of the General Committee an Executive of five members representing five zones (into which the country had been divided) was delegated to carry out the main functions of the new committee. Under the able chairmanship of C.R.F.O. F. W. Delve, C.B.E., this Executive met periodically and recently, at the annual meeting of the Committee, tribute was paid to Mr. Delve for his keen and enthusiastic support.

A "Live Wire"

The Committee was indeed fortunate in having such a "live wire" as Company Officer B. C. Knott (No. 5 Region) as its honorary

secretary, and an equally zealous honorary treasurer in Section Leader J. W. Levy (No. 5 Region). These officials have certainly borne the brunt of the work and backed by a keen executive they have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the task of carrying out the main purposes of the organization. Many difficulties were encountered and although all the plans mooted did not pan out as expected, there can be no doubt that "something has been attempted, something done."

Inter-Regional Competition

The Inter-Regional Football Competition can be written down as a success, although keen disappointment was felt at the disinclination of a few Regions to participate. No. 10 Region were the winners of the northern section, whilst No. 7 Region were top of the southern section. In the final No. 10 were just too good for the Southerners and their performance ranked them as worthy champions. No. 10 had the good fortune in being able to call on a number of professionals of repute, including Roxburgh, the ex-Blackpool goalkeeper who was "capped" for England during the season.

Outstanding Achievement

In representative matches the Service more often than not joined in with the Civil Defence, but perhaps the most outstanding achievement was the success of our National team in the Inter-Allied Services Cup. The team reached the semi-final and was narrowly beaten by the British Army after having held the lead for the greater part of the game.

Space will not permit me to recount our activities in the other sports, but an effort will be made to deal with them in our next issue. In the meantime, items for this feature will be welcomed and should be forwarded to the Editor.

"A FLY!"

I ARRIVED about a quarter of an hour after the flying bomb had exploded. There, right in the middle of a double tramway track, was the crater, some five feet deep and ten feet across, which it had made on landing.

The National Fire Service and Civil Defence parties were on the spot, calmly, grimly settling down to their work in close co-operation. It was obvious that fly-bomb work was no novelty to them.

I dipped under a rope, which was being stretched by firemen to cordon off the stricken area, and made my way over many obstructions to a group of wrecked vehicles. The first, so I was told, had been a tram, now it was a shattered hulk—just the chassis remaining; the whole of its sides and top had simply vanished.

Beside it stood another tram, also badly shattered, and, to one side, a bus with its roof torn away and dangling over the side: firemen were engaged in extricating a badly-injured person from its upper deck. It was the evening rush-hour and all these vehicles had been crammed full of passengers: it was not pleasant to contemplate what they had endured.

I spoke to an N.F.S. officer whom I happened to know, and he lent me his orderly as guide. There was a little fire—in a large heap of massive debris. Two jets of water were playing on it, whilst men, volunteers from passers-by, were feverishly shifting it, piece by piece, as it was rumoured that people were beneath.

Stretcher parties were moving about, a few of their burdens ominously covered from head to foot by a blanket. Ambulances, staffed by women, drove off as they were filled—while others, moving in, parked under tall plane trees. I noticed that blast had completely stripped these trees of their leaves, which curiously enough had not been scattered to the winds, but now formed a bright green carpet at their foot.

Across the street a multi-storied block of working-class flats, a corner of which had only a few months ago been roughly handled by an H.E. bomb, testified to the extreme violence of the blast to which it had been subjected.

A large part of the front wall had crashed out onto the pavement and, further along a wide panel was leaning precariously outward, and might fall at any moment.

One of the odd things that I noticed was that on one side of the building, mattresses, furniture, and household belongings of every description bulged through the windows and overhung the street. They had, perhaps, been forced through the windows by falling floors or they may have been sucked out by blast.

Windows and window-frames for hundreds of yards around had completely disappeared, with the result that the ground over a vast area was thickly strewn with glass fragments and wooden splinters.

A Civil Defence Incident Officer, wearing a steel helmet painted a light blue, was setting up an inquiry office in a ground floor corner room; though partially wrecked, it formed temporary refuge from the rain, which poured pitilessly down.

A "Fly!"

Here a girl worker in Civil Defence uniform was extemporizing a table from the room's wreckage and getting ready to handle the flood of enquiries which would presently come to her.

A walk through the front block of flats showed many with their rooms choked with fallen ceilings, broken furniture and shattered partitions. In a passageway lay the dead body of a man, bloody and battered. Stretcher bearers, a man and a woman, followed on our heels, and they would be helped in their gruesome task by men from a Heavy Rescue squad who were awaiting their arrival.

N.F.S. salvage vehicles were now driving up, and before nightfall those buildings which were still habitable would have their gaping roofs covered by tarpaulins.

Under an archway a frightened girl, deathly white, was being comforted by friends. Presently she was noticed by a young Civil Defence messenger. Excusably excited, he was calling "Blankets!—Shock!"—then, procuring these himself, later shepherded her *en route* to a Rest Centre.

The rear block of flats had received rather less damage, though not a window or window-frame remained in place. Here the occupiers were flushed and excited, feeling the reaction from the moments of deadly fear through which they had passed.

"Just as I'd finished me cleaning," said a trousered woman, hands in pockets, surveying a kitchen strewn with smashed furniture.

Another woman was trying to care for some damaged furniture, while a little black cat—just rescued from under her collapsed house, where its brother lay dead—clung fiercely to her shoulder. Though quite unable to forget its experience, and covered in dust, the cat purred away loudly, but only so long as it was given the haven of refuge provided by its owner.

"We'll be along in a minute," called an N.F.S. officer, addressing a pair of women struggling with furniture difficulties beyond their strength. "Just clear up one room and do the black-out," was the cheerful response, "We can sit in chairs for the night. We'll do lovely."

"I've saved the aspidistra," chirruped a shrill voice from a backroom.

Cockney courage and cheerfulness at its best; hard to witness without an uncomfortable feeling that one must either blow one's nose fiercely or be embarrassed by tears.

In a doorway, seated in a wheeled chair with no one apparently to look after her, was an old lady; patient, resigned, bewildered—a pathetic sight. "Yes, I am alright" she told me, and indicated that friends would soon be coming for her.

In all that stricken area, there were no tears, no complaints, no cursing of the enemy—though that might well come later when their menfolk returned to see what had once been their homes.

Feeling somewhat numbed, I said goodbye to my N.F.S. guide.

The rain was still falling remorselessly.—"C."

THE N.F.S. COLLEGE

The month of September was surely one of the most important months in the life of the College. It was most eventful in many ways, but the outstanding incident was the celebration of the third Anniversary of the College and this was observed in a memorable manner on the 29th of the month.

Some long time ago, past and present members of the Staff, instructional, administrative, maintenance and domestic, decided to approach the Commandant with a request that he should allow his portrait to be painted. This he readily agreed to, and Mr. Norman Hepple was commissioned. The Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison, M.P., Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security was then approached with a request that he would visit the College and present the portrait to the members of the College Staff for all time. His acceptance was a great compliment to the College and to the Service.

Accompanying the Home Secretary on his visit were Sir Arthur Dixon, Commander Firebrace, Mrs. Cuthbert, Mr. Bicknell, members of the Fire Staff and Mrs. Richardson, sister of Mr. Morrison.

After inspecting part time personnel engaged in pumping operations and other officers solving an incident on the Oil Tactical Table at the Lido, he witnessed Senior Officers studying the tactics of fire fighting in the Model Room and Junior Officers assessing the fire situation on a Model Factory. The women students were participating in a Control Room Exercise and he showed particular interest in their methods.

After lunch Mr. Morrison said:—

"Although it has existed for only three years, the National Fire Service College has made a big contribution to the development of fire-fighting technique and efficiency in this country. A war product, created to meet a war situation, as indeed was the National Fire Service itself, its efforts even up-to-date will have a lasting influence in the protection of Britain against fire. It is my confident hope that the Fire Service College will go on after the war.

The success of the College is largely due, I think, to the practical purpose for which it was intended, and the devotion of the officers concerned in its development in never losing sight of that purpose. When the Fire Service was taken over nationally in 1941, it was seen that great advantages would be gained if all the best in fire-fighting technique and experience were also nationally pooled, unified and standardized, so that every part of the country could benefit. The College was the answer. It was established with the aim of producing, not only practical fire-fighting technicians, but good Officers who could control both fires and men. This aim has been achieved in the National Fire Service of to-day, which has deservedly won the confidence and respect of the public.

The College has always been more than a centre of teaching. It is also a meeting place for senior officers, who discuss their problems and, among themselves, find many of the answers.

The analysis of every serious fire, together with remarks by the Home Office Fire Staff, goes to the College, and so the mistakes which are made in the field are brought home to the students. In these ways the National Fire Service's fight against fire has become an organic and developing force.

Great credit is due to Commander Firebrace, Chief of Fire Staff, and Brigadier Hewitt, the Commandant at the College from the beginning, for their insistence on practical tuition. The instructors pass on knowledge they themselves have gained from many years of fighting fires. Instructors come and go—go back to get a wet shirt, and recall what fire fighting on the

ground, at night, in rain and cold, is like as compared with the gentle art of fire fighting in the lecture room. For the aim of the College, first and last, is to produce fire-fighters who can lead other fire-fighters, and this can be done only by fire-fighters who can teach.

The College has pioneered in other directions. It has always been co-educational. Of the 10,000 students who have passed through, no less than 3,000 have been women, a high proportion of their numbers. We have always recognized the high qualities and the status of our Women's Service, and we have been rewarded. I do not have to stress it, for everybody knows how our Firewomen of all ranks have stuck to their jobs unflinchingly and done fine work through high explosive and incendiary bombing, fly-bombing and shelling on the coast.

The College has stepped within the last few weeks to teach the science of fire protection—the science of fighting the fire before it starts, a subject which had to wait until the cover against fires caused by the enemy or mischance or carelessness, had been completed. This is a most important and significant development. Fire protection planning must be incorporated at the architect's drawing board. The students learn what should and should not be done in planning and constructing buildings to prevent the possibility of fire. They are taught how to inspect the completed building together with its fire equipment, and even how to train the occupants, if they so desire, in the avoidance of fire. This is a part of fire-fighting which is little developed in any country. For us it may mean the saving of many of the country's capital assets in the times to come, when these assets will be greatly needed in our recovery after the war."

In replying for the College to the Secretary of State's speech, the Commandant thanked him for visiting the College on its third anniversary, and continued :—

"Such a visit is, I know, greatly appreciated, particularly in these times when his time is fully occupied with the major affairs of State.

Secondly, I thank him both personally and as Commandant for consenting to present to the College a portrait of myself, a gift from the Staff past and present.

This gift I regard as one of the greatest honours paid to me during my lifetime as it represents for me a token of affection for which no words can express my feelings. Apart from the personal aspect of this presentation, I visualize in years to come a number of such portraits of Commandants, more worthy than I, adorning the walls of the College.

May I congratulate the artist who painted my portrait with such skill and who concealed the more unpleasant aspects of my countenance. One hopes that he may go from strength to strength as an artist and live to paint many future Commandants.

Mr. Morrison has paid tribute to the work of the College. May I add thanks to my Staff past and present for their whole-hearted co-operation in the evolving of a system of training which has emphasized the basic nature of "Humanics." This is the only road to happiness and technical efficiency.

We here at the College are very proud of our 9,700 disciples who have passed through our portals and passed this system on. As their reward, may I quote Barrie when he wrote :—

*Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others
cannot keep it from themselves."*

At this stage it is surely opportune for some of the achievements of the College to be mentioned in greater detail.

August 1941 saw the Nationalization, on paper, of the Brigades into one Service, but the College can surely claim great credit for having materially helped in the success which attended nationalization in practice, as it is the only place in the country where officers and men of all ranks from each and every Fire Force and station can meet on

one common ground. This meeting together has done much to unify the Service and bring greater understanding to all members.

The College is not in control of Fire Service training in the country, but it has established a model for Regional, Area and Divisional Schools to work upon; has trained, and in certain instances supplied the Commandants of these Schools and has trained their instructors to a very high standard of proficiency. This has resulted in a much improved degree of technical efficiency.

Training on every station throughout every Region has felt the influence of the College, and part-time personnel too have derived great benefit.

The ramifications are even greater than this: Officers from the Navy, Army and Air Force attended Special Courses at the College; National Fire Service Officers who had benefited greatly from their courses were sent overseas for the protection of valuable installations, and amongst the N.F.S. Overseas Contingent are to be found many who have passed through its doors.

The College is not a research establishment. Far from it, because a most efficient Research and Experiments Department already exists, but it is one channel through which problems have reached the responsible department.

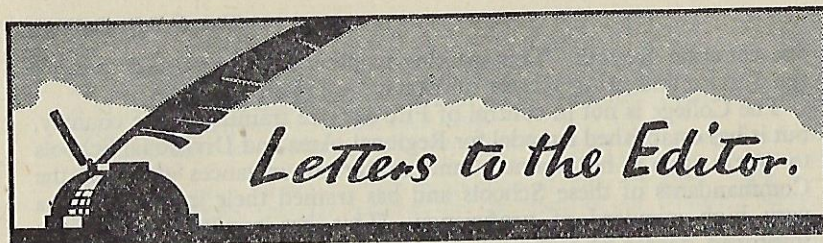
The war situation demanded that the largest possible number of officers should be passed through and this number now approaches ten thousand, but with the changes in the outlook of the war, it has been possible for students to be retained at the College for much longer periods than previously. The curriculum has been widened and now includes many subjects never previously included in the syllabus.

Visitors are frequent and number many from the Navy, Army and Air Force, from overseas, from Industrial Brigades, and from non-uniformed posts throughout this country. The internal organization which allows for approximately three hundred students on ten different courses, each studying many varied subjects, to be organized simultaneously without a hitch, never fails to impress those who can appreciate the work entailed.

Naturally, as the war has shown signs of drawing towards its final stages, the College has kept an alert eye on the post-war requirements of the Service. Although this problem has been studied for many months past, it is only in recent weeks that it has been reflected in the instruction given. Change from war to peace must be gradual, but a straw in the wind is the Fire Protection Long Course which commenced on 13th September and will last for over four months.

Whilst the College may not always be housed in its present building it is firmly believed that, whatever form the Fire Service may take in the future, there will always be a Fire College.

But for the advent of the war a College would have been established under the Fire Brigades Act, 1938; the war has shown the necessity for it. It has proved its value to the present Service and it is difficult to imagine a post-war service, nationalized or not, without some central College to provide the high standard of training which will be demanded,



Dear Mr. Editor,

LULL PERIOD ATTENDANCE CARDS

In his letter in the September issue of *The Jet* "Onlooker" says that in his opinion lull period attendance cards (K.429) are totally unnecessary and a waste of time and paper. It is regrettable that the purpose of the lull period attendance cards does not appear to be understood by "Onlooker," and it is to be hoped that this is an exception.

The purpose of these cards is to show the Mobilizing Officer at the Sub-Divisional or Divisional Control the number and types of appliances, and the Stations from which they are to be ordered to a fire occurring in any particular street. The card also shows the next nearest appliances to be ordered in the event of an assistance message being received from the fireground. "Onlooker" is quite correct in stating that a standard turnout applies to most fires, and is usually a Pump Escape and two or three Pumps, but it does not follow that these appliances will be ordered from the same Station for every fire occurring in the Sub-Division; neither does it follow that for a fire at one extremity of a Sub-Division the next nearest appliances will be from the same Station as for a fire at the other end of the Sub-Division.

In most towns there are a number of N.F.S. Stations with one or more Sub-Divisional Controls. When a fire call is received the attendance is not necessarily sent from one Station and the appliances may have to be sent from several different Stations. It is therefore essential that the Sub-Divisional Control should order these appliances from the Station or Stations nearest to the fire. This information is readily obtainable from the lull period attendance card and the only other

way to obtain the information is by reference to a map, which is cumbersome and slow, or by local knowledge which can be unreliable. The mobilizing board only shows what appliances are available at the various Stations; it does not show which Stations are the nearest to the fire.

"Onlooker" suggests that if any set of cards at Control is examined, a number of cards will be found to be identical; this shows a complete misunderstanding of the indexing system. One card only should be made out to cover a group of streets where the appliances, the Stations and the next nearest Stations are identical. This card is numbered and the number inserted in the alphabetical Street Index against all those streets to which the one card is applicable. This process is continued until all the streets in the Sub-Division or Division are covered by a card. Immediately a fire call is received at the Sub-Divisional Control, the Mobilizing Officer refers to the Street Index, looks up the lull period attendance card, the number of which is shown against the particular street in the Street Index, and orders out the attendance shown thereon. The Mobilizing Officer retains the card so that the next nearest appliances can be ordered out without delay in the event of an assistance message being received.

In one particular town, which has about 5,000 streets, there are five Sub-Divisions and one Divisional Control. The number of lull period attendance cards held by each Sub-Divisional Control to cover the streets in its own Sub-Division is about 20.

Divisional Control holds a master set of cards numbering, in all, about 100, which covers every street in the town. The system is equally applicable to rural Sub-Divisions, except that the index for referring to

the lull period attendance cards need not include the names of streets in small villages, the villages being listed in alphabetical order.

It is interesting to note that lull period attendance cards were used by the London Fire Brigade prior to the outbreak of war, and the existing K.429 is a development of the system successfully employed by that Brigade. Properly used, the lull period attendance cards simplify the ordering of appliances and eliminate the possibility of error.

Yours etc., G. M. C.

Sir,

K.429's

I was very much surprised to read "Onlooker's" letter in the September issue of *The Jet*. It seems that in his (or her) part of the country the one card per street idea still persists, despite the fact that this practice is deprecated in paragraph 6 of Operations and Training Notes No. 25/1944, and of course is contrary to paragraph 11 of National Fire Service Instruction No. 81/1942 which makes it quite clear that Sub-Divisions should be divided into suitable areas and only one card should be made out for each of these areas.

The suggestion that there should be a standard first attendance for each Sub-Division does not appear to be very sound. In the majority of Sub-Divisions there are several types of risk and as far as resources permit appropriate first attendances should be pre-determined for such risks.

Lastly, "Onlooker" suggests that the simultaneous arrival at a fire (what a first attendance!) might harass the officer in charge and so delay getting water on the job. I cannot agree. Surely the officer in charge of the fire can put one or two appliances to work at once and instruct the remainder to remain fast for a short time whilst he weighs up the fire situation and decides upon his tactics.

Yours faithfully, "Yoicks."

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

In these days I suppose the topic which is uppermost in the minds of all Officers, both those who hope to remain in the Service and those who will in due time be returning to their peace-time avocations, is the shape of things to come, and I feel that the expression of the individual views of as many as possible may in some small measure assist those whose difficult task these matters are, to assess the many extremely divergent thoughts that are undoubtedly in many minds. I therefore venture to express certain random thoughts on this matter, which, although they may not be very original and may be extremely controversial, are at least sincere.

In the first place, I would make it clear that although I am one of those who will not be remaining in the whole-time Service, I think that it would be a great mistake to assume that I and many others will immediately upon release cease to take even an inactive interest in the Service which has absorbed quite a large slice of our lives. Indeed, I hope that in some way we shall be permitted some place in the Service, if only under a reference which I think can best be expressed as "Welfare."

Secondly, I am extremely interested in the frequency of the use of the word "education" in the many questionnaires at present circulating from official and semi-official bodies in connection with the status, etc. of Officers in the Post-War Service. I have read several of these very carefully to try and arrive at some definition of this word in the minds of the persons who originated the questionnaires, but at the moment have failed to arrive at any conclusion satisfactory to myself. It would appear that the question of educational standards required of Officers in the Post-War Service looms very large, but I feel very strongly that mere scholastic attainment evidenced by examination results is a very misleading criterion for judging the capabilities of a man for Officer rank. Whilst I agree that special technical qualifications evidenced by

examination result, e.g. M.I.Mech.E. might well add to the claims of an applicant for a particular appointment, I cannot deprecate too strongly any tendency to exclude an applicant purely on the absence of successful examination results. Surely in the improved Service that we all sincerely hope to see grow in the Post-War period, one of the firmest foundations would be an Officer body whose first qualification would be the ability to conduct themselves as Officers in the widest possible sense of the word. Only by such considerations will the establishment of an *esprit de corps* which will achieve that raising of status in the Service in general, be attained.

In considering all matters connected with the Post-War Service, whatever form eventually emerges from the present mass of conjecture, it seems to be that there must be a dual policy; the short-term policy, i.e. the transition from war establishment to peace-time and the long-term policy, i.e. the sort of Service we would all like to see, and which cannot in my view possibly be attained in any period of less than, say, ten years. The short-term policy should, of course, be moulded as far as possible into such channels as to merge gradually into the permanent Service.

I fully realize that there are a multitude of difficulties and awkward facets to this matter, but this is my reason for stressing the long-term policy, since if betterment is worthwhile at all it is surely worth planning and waiting for if in the end the achievement is what the original planners were striving for.

I think you will agree that the views of many of your readers on this large topic might make interesting and informative reading.

Yours faithfully, "CANTAB"

Dear Mr. Editor,

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

Although we have just celebrated the Third Anniversary of the National Fire Service, the above subject does not seem to have been adequately dealt with during that time, neither does the correct order

appear in the Drill Book or in any general Instruction.

Some may consider the matter trivial, but my view is that if tradition is to be built up, this can only be done by adhering to the principals adopted in all Services.

It is very embarrassing, when attending public functions, etc., to be doubtful as to the correct order of precedence, particularly between men and women holding rank in this Service. The nearest equivalent that I have been able to arrive at is contained in N.F.S.I. No.29/1941, but this is by no means conclusive.

It has been more or less an accepted fact in commercial business, that a woman holding an equivalent position to a man receives approximately two-thirds of the man's pay, and this, of course, could apply to the ranks of the N.F.S. The position does arise where a Group Officer is the Senior Woman Officer, particularly in a Division, when at the same time there are two Senior Male Officers holding equal rank. In my opinion, the correct order of precedence should be as follows :-

Divisional Officer
Column Officer
Senior Company Officer
Company Officer
Section Leader
Leading Fireman

Area Officer
Assistant Area Officer
Group Officer
Assistant Group Officer
Senior Leading Firewoman
Leading Firewoman

In compiling this list, I have in my opinion rightly put the Women Officers junior to the men, and ignored the question of seniority by date of appointment, as between male and female, as I think that this should only apply to the actual ranks bearing in mind the fact that if this was not so, a Senior Leading Firewoman on a Station in charge of a Section Leader later appointed, would be senior to the Officer-in-Charge if he were to assume that position at any time.

On the face of it, these points may seem trivial, but my contention is that if a standard of discipline is to be maintained, Orders and Instruc-

tions should be carried out. Further, if anyone would take the trouble to delve into these they will find there are many subjects where the Order of Precedence becomes essential, such as "Cross Saluting", "Telephone communications," etc., etc. The Order of Precedence is strictly adhered to in all Local Authorities, to whom most of us look as leaders of local tradition, and although this fact is apparent at any official function, no thought seems to have been given to the Order of Precedence of the National Fire Service.

I have given a lot of thought to this subject, because I am personally a member of a Local Authority, and also an Officer in the National Fire Service (this is the reason I prefer to remain anonymous) and I feel that if instruction was given to the National Fire Service, and guidance given to Local Authorities, it would be greatly welcomed.

Yours faithfully, "T.R.2."

Dear Sir,

N.F.S. SELECTION BOARD

My concern is the contents of General Fire Force Instruction 21/1944, which deals with the function and set up of the National Fire Service Officers' Board. This selection board is based on the principles adopted by the War Office Selection Boards, and whilst in no way wishing to detract from the high principles of the scheme, I feel prompted to put forward a few points, based on observation of individual cases who have passed through the W.A.S.B.

Whatever standard tests of psychoanalysis, etc., are adopted, I cannot help feeling that the results fall short of expectations. From a future ratepayers' point of view, operational fire fighting efficiency is the primary qualification required from the N.F.S. (assuming that local authority control will not persist). But I am not a little alarmed at the type of potential officer which the National Fire Service Officers' Board will select, in direct contrast to the type of individual who fails to make the grade.

I hope that my outlook in this matter is unbiased and without the

proverbial axe to grind, but when I heard recently that an essentially practical operational Officer, who in the opinions of many who had worked with and under him possessed ideal qualities of an officer, I venture to suggest that there is some ground for complaint in the results which have been evidenced. Surely the fundamental essentials of an operational officer are courage and a sound practical knowledge based on a theoretical background—it obviously being impossible to judge the former virtue through snap questions, etc., which can never accurately determine a person's actions under real conditions. It might be possible to give every satisfaction on paper, but under stress of circumstances a person may have entirely different reactions in spite of all the will in the world.

I fail to see why potential officers should not be judged, firstly on their practical knowledge of all branches of Service requirements, and secondly on first-hand unbiased recommendations from senior officers—who should know instinctively on whom they can depend in an emergency. Qualities which have always given the fire officer his traditional place among the world's heroes seem to be those which cannot be judged on paper or by oral examination, especially over a short period.

I am wondering if I have been unfortunate to stumble across isolated cases, and whether there are other officers who have experienced more practical results from the War Office Selection Board, and can therefore express a more convincing argument in its favour.—G.W.B.

Dear Sir,

At the present time the principal topic of conversation seems to be "The Post-War Fire Service." The general trend of this conversation is on the basis of "Wait and See."

I think I am voicing the opinion of almost all our members when I say that the Association is not only competent but also desirous of advising the Secretaries of State upon matters other than conditions of service.

The people best suited to frame practical reforms are not collectors of statistics, Civil Servants, or mem-

Letters to the Editor

bers of Local or other Authorities but the members of the Service itself.

If the right type of man (and woman) is to be attracted to the Service, then the Service must be made attractive, by which I mean its scope must be widened to enable it to serve the country not only after fire has developed but in the larger field of Fire Prevention.

If this extension of its functions can be achieved, then, and only then, can it hold out prospects to many ambitious recruits.

In other words, an increase in the service given will automatically result in an increase in the status of the profession with a corresponding upward trend in remuneration and all other conditions of service.

It is in this manner that I think the Association can best serve the profession and I hope its energies will be devoted primarily to this end.

Yours truly, "St.Mungo"

Dear Mr. Editor, .

FUSION

I must say that I am in agreement with "Aedile" in his comment under the above heading in the September issue of *The Jet*.

'Unity is Strength,' but with so many associations representing the Fire Service we are divided in ourselves and, as "Aedile" states, it is difficult to understand how so many organizations can exist side-by-side with almost identical objects.

Very few Fire Service personnel are in a position whereby they can afford to belong to more than one or two of such organizations and even then the subscriptions are a drain on their resources.

Surely it would be possible to form an amalgamated organization with departments to cover all Fire Service personnel and all aims and objects, e.g. Industrial, Professional

and Voluntary, and Service Conditions, Legal and Pensions, Educational and Technical, Welfare and Benevolence.

With reduced overhead expenses and an increased membership, quite a nominal annual subscription only need be charged to members to cover them for all eventualities, and at the same time all would benefit from membership of an organization truly representative of the Fire Service.

Yours sincerely, W. J. M.

Dear Sir,

DEMobilIZATION

It is practically impossible to pick up a newspaper to-day without reading something about the demobilization of men and women from the Services.

As members of the fourth Service of the Crown, how much better it would be to know whether these demobilization plans are going to apply to this Service as well as the other three Services.

As one of those women who, when hostilities cease and the country returns to normal, still has to find employment, this is a very vital question and always at this time in the forefront of my mind. Surely it is possible for some hint to be given as to the Post-War policy of the Service as applicable to Firewomen.

I am sure that many Firewomen of all ranks must feel as I do, and some information on this point would alleviate the anxiety they must feel at the present time. Information on this point would also be in the Service's interests, as I for one would be prepared to give more in every way to a job which is going to be mine in the distant future as well as to-day.

Yours faithfully,

Perplexed A.G.O.

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OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed in April, 1941, and was originally known as "The Chief Fire Officers' Association." Its present title was adopted after the nationalization of the Service, and its Objects as declared in the Rules are as follows :—

- (i) to promote the efficiency, well-being and status of the Service ;
- (ii) to associate and unite the Officers of the Service, and provide a focus and channel whereby members can express their opinions on matters affecting the Service ;
- (iii) to safeguard and improve the conditions of service of members and their general interests ;
- (iv) to give advice, assistance and legal aid to members and, in approved cases, to former members ;
- (v) to make, where necessary, representations to Government Departments and Local Authorities, and to be a channel through which these Departments and Authorities can communicate with members ;
- (vi) to diffuse information on any of the above matters.