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CHIEF TABER REPORTS UPON NEW FIRE APPARATUS.

Mayor Curley received from Chief John O. Taber of the Boston Fire Department upon the 24th instant, a report upon the installation of new fire apparatus and the further motorization of the Department.

The report of Chief Taber was as follows:

CITY OF BOSTON,
FIRE DEPARTMENT.

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT,
July 21, 1922.

HON. JAMES M. CURLEY,
Mayor of Boston:

MY DEAR MR. MAYOR,—For your information I beg to tender the following data as the same affects motor-driven apparatus:

We have received from the American-LaFrance Company the following various types of motor-driven apparatus, eleven pieces in all:

Seven Type 75, 750-gallon combination pump and hose cars.

Three Type 75, combination chemical and hose motor cars.

One Type 31, 75-foot aerial truck.

The hose cars are of the six-cylinder type and the aerial truck is of the four-wheel tractor type. These extremely powerful hose cars were purchased for the reason that we have found from experience that in heavy storms we have the required power. The four-wheel tractor for aerial trucks which has come into existence in recent years is singularly flexible, especially where there is also a tiller, in that it can be utilized in our narrower streets and thoroughfares, while on the other hand, with the ordinary front-drive tractor, proper manipulation of apparatus is exceedingly difficult, and in many instances impossible.

All of the apparatus is equipped with a solid 8 per cent semipneumatic tire, which is very resilient, eliminating much of the pound and vibration developed in very heavy apparatus such as we have in this department. Furthermore, they possess a nonskid quality which is truly wonderful and, of course, after trial and experience, we have adopted this type of tire as it spells safety not alone to the apparatus but to the members of the department who are carried on apparatus to fires.

After reviewing the entire field, it was decided to locate the various apparatus with the following companies:

Engine 4.—Having very limited runs, a Christie front-drive steam fire engine, 4½ size pump, was placed in service with this company, thereby replacing horse-drawn steam fire engine and three horses.

Engine 6.—The same conditions prevailed here as in Engine 4, mentioned above. In this house will be located a new 750-gallon combination pumper and hose motor car, carrying hose equipment, so that really the service in this section of the city is practically doubled, in that they have two pieces of apparatus carrying the necessary chemicals, pumpage and hose, with efficient operation to handle a very stiff fire.

Engines 12, 13 and 24.—Will be equipped in much the same manner as Engine Company No. 6, described above.

Engine 49.—Now a hose company, will have installed a combination pump and hose motor car.

With the exception of Engine Company No. 49, in each of the above companies there will be a double service similar to that of Engine Company No. 6.

The hose car which will be taken out of Engine 49 will be located in Engine House 45 in the central section of the West Roxbury district, which will give them double service, and will also reinforce the efficiency of the fire stream by having a deck gun which can be utilized to stop or hold a fire which, by virtue of a good start, might extend.

It is our intention, as soon as the companies herein mentioned are fully motorized, to eliminate independent chemical companies, as this is really not needed owing to the fact that the apparatus now in construction (motor) has 50 per cent more efficiency in its operation covering a larger area in one half the time that the horse-drawn apparatus would consume. These chemicals are a surplus, and the apparatus which is now in service with the chemical companies will be relocated with motor pumping engines, thereby reducing the overhead and obtaining a much greater pressure than they would have operating from a hydrant or as a chemical company.

Again, demonstrating the double service that the combination pump and hose motor car and the combination chemical and hose motor car, operating from the same house, would give, they could operate under extraordinary conditions as two pieces of apparatus, with more efficiency and a lesser number of men. For example, we will take Chemical Company No. 10. By virtue of its location, within striking distance of Engines 12, 13, 14, 23 and 24, in some few instances in this group it is within approximately 1,500 feet therefrom, and is also located in the same quarters with a truck company. What chance is there for Chemical 10 to operate with companies responding to a central location assuming that it be the location of Chemical 10's quarters? Ordinarily, the apparatus would be there within a minute or a minute and a half from the time that the box was pulled. The greatest distance for all of the apparatus responding would be less than one half mile. Such cases as these have been picked out in which there has been needless overhead existent, and with motorization we have not alone reduced maintenance, but will render a more efficient service, and the men that are not carried on this chemical company will be used for strengthening in man power other companies in the department.

Extensively running to single-units known as a three-way combination service in a city such as we have, in which the construction is more than seventy-five per cent wood frame, all of it built to burn, it has been found to be the most practical move. After all, the greatest factor is getting to the fire safely and quickly with a heavy stream if needed. This can only be done where you have a double-unit response, and where such is the case there is always a deck gun which carries a heavy stream of water if needed, which can be handled by one member of the company, permitting the other members of the

crew to assist in handling flexible streams within or without any side of the building where they may be required.

Engine Company No. 7's quarters are to be rebuilt, and during the said period the horses now stationed therein will be taken out of service, and a 1,000-gallon motor pumper will be assigned there, thus operating as a single unit until their house is completed. The company will be installed, upon completion of its quarters, with a 1,000-gallon combination pump and hose motor car and a six-cylinder combination chemical and hose motor car with deck-gun equipment, so that we are really increasing the efficiency of the force in the congested district with this new installation.

I beg to call your attention to an item wherein you instructed me to provide a motorized ladder truck for the Parker Hill section. Under the present existing conditions, I find that a city service truck would be suited for 98 per cent of truck requirements in that vicinity. In view of this fact, and with a certainty of response with one aerial ladder, I feel that a truck of the type above-mentioned should be located there and I have made arrangements to establish in the quarters of Engine Company No. 37 a motorized city service truck, thereby replacing a horse-drawn truck.

In addition to carrying ladders the truck above described will have a battery of chemical tanks for primary use in the extinguishment of fires. This should certainly reassure the people of the Parker Hill district.

Upon completion of the assignment of apparatus mentioned above, we will have for reserve apparatus the following:

Five motor pumpers; five combination chemical and hose cars; three aerial trucks; three city service trucks; three Christie front-drive tractors; one water tower, thus making a total of twenty pieces, to be utilized for replacement in the event of breakdown, repair or special assignment.

The problem now at hand is fuel, and this has been provided for in many ways. First, by emergency service established from headquarters. Second, by units located throughout the department, and the establishment of a new fuel service by placing in commission a large-sized Mack truck which we now have on hand, with approximately two or three tons of fuel, thus taking the place of the now obsolete horse-drawn apparatus.

The establishment of the apparatus hereinbefore mentioned will release approximately thirty-three (33) horses from service, and will result in motorizing the department by fully eighty-five (85) per cent.

At this writing we have in service six (6) horse-drawn engines and seven (7) horse-drawn trucks, which will in all probability be taken care of by appropriation to cover further purchase and installation in the future of motor-driven apparatus.

Respectfully,

JOHN O. TABER,
Chief of Department.

Locations of companies affected, as described in accompanying communication:

Engine 4, Bulfinch street, West End.

Engine 6, Leverett street, West End.

Engine 7, East street, city proper.

Engine 12, Dudley street and Blue Hill avenue, Roxbury.

Engine 13, Cabot street, Roxbury.

Engine 24, Quincy and Warren streets, Roxbury.

Engine 49, Milton and Hamilton streets, Readville.

Chemical 10, Dudley and Winslow streets, Roxbury. (In quarters of Ladder Company No. 4.)

Mayor Curley issued the following statement:

"The report of the Fire Commissioner setting forth that with the installation of the eleven new pieces of apparatus installed this week that the Department will be 85 per cent motorized is most gratifying and one of the pleasing features of the report is the knowledge that the horse-drawn ladder truck located at Longwood avenue and Huntington avenue and upon which the Parker Hill Hospital section relied in part for protection during the past four years is to be replaced with modern motor apparatus."