

*Fire Department.*—The following communication was received from the chief Engineer of the department.  
ENGINEERS OFFICE, Fire Department, }  
Feb. 5, 1852. }

To the Hon. Mayor and Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of Boston.

**GENTLEMEN:**—In conformity with Section 5th, of the Fire Ordinance, I herewith report to you the absences of the Board of Engineers, since the formation of the present department on the first day of July, 1851.

I would take this opportunity to state that a majority of the alarms given for fires since that time have been very imperfect; in many instances only one bell having been rung, and calling out but a small portion of the department at any one fire.

The engineers, in making this report of their absences, have considered themselves on duty when they have been called out by the alarms, although it has been impossible for them always to reach the scene of the fire, until after it was extinguished, or such portion of the department which was on duty had been discharged, living as they do, some at East and South Boston, and at the extreme parts of the City.

And I cheerfully give my testimony to the promptness evinced by the members of the Board of Engineers and the department generally, in their attention to the duties assigned them.

*Report of Charles S. Clark.*—July 19, fire Dover street, did not get an alarm; 25, fire North Margin street, not a general alarm; Aug. 7, fire Portland street, was in New York; 19, fire Pleasant street, out of city; Dec. 24, fire India wharf, sick. Whole number of absences 5.

*Joshua Jacobs.*—July 10, fire Salem street, did not get an alarm; 31, fire South Boston, did not get an alarm; Aug. 15, fire Commercial wharf, alarm not general; 24, fire Franklin School House, did not get an alarm; Sept. 3, fire High street, did not get an alarm; Dec. 21, fire Sea street, did not get an alarm. Whole number of absences 6.

*George W. Bird.*—July 19, fire Dover street, bell on Franklin school-house not rung. Whole number of absence 1.

*Elisha Smith, Jr.*—Aug. 24, fire at Franklin school house, not a general alarm. Whole number of absence 1.

*Anson Ellms*—Has been present at all the fires which have occurred at East Boston, since July 1, 1851.

*Frederick A. Colburn.*—July 25, fire North Margin street; not a general alarm. Aug. 15, fire Commercial wharf; do do do. Aug. 21, Franklin School House, do do do. Oct. 11, Cornhill; absent to New York. Oct. 12, Deacon street; do do do. Whole number of absences, 5.

*Thomas Haviland.*—July 10, fire Salem street; July 18, Cambridge street; Aug. 9, Causeway street; Aug. 27, Broad street; Sept. 3, High street; Oct. 4, South Margin street; Oct. 18, Richmond street; Nov. 27, Griggs wharf. All in consequence of imperfect alarms at the west part of the city. Whole number of absences, 8.

*Lewis Beck*—Has been on duty at all fires since his appointment, October 27, 1851.

All of which is respectfully submitted,  
WML BARNICOAT, Chief Engineer.