

BOSTON'S HORSE-DRAWN FIRE APPARATUS SOLD

"Old-Timers" Disposed of at Auction Sale — Five Pieces Sold to One Bidder For \$415 Each

The last of Boston's horse-drawn fire apparatus went under the hammer at the Bulfinch-st firehouse this forenoon. In slightly more than 10 minutes City Auctioneer Edward W. Foye had disposed of five of the Fire Department's old-time steam engines and one automatic stationary engine. The five pieces of horse-drawn apparatus bought by the city at an original cost of about \$27,500, or \$5500 each, went today for a total of \$2075, or \$415 each. The stationary automatic steam engine went for \$70.

The auction sale was attended by perhaps 100 men, many of them junk and metal dealers. The sale did not attract people outside those who might want to buy the old-timers except for the junk in them. There were, of course, some out-of-town people in the group that looked up into the face of auctioneer Foye when he began the sale, but nobody present seemed interested in purchasing one of the old fire engines for factory service, for the protection of a large estate or an amusement park. Nor was the collector of antiques present—if he was he did not speak up.

Some people a few days ago thought that some of the historical societies ought to become interested in the old relics of other days in Boston, and one man said that the city ought to forego the acceptance of the mere pittance the treasury would receive and present the old apparatus to some of the antiquarian societies. This suggestion, however, brought forth the information that these fire engines, though horse-drawn and although they had been in the service of the department for many years, are only old in name. All of them had been remodelled from time to time to be kept abreast with the progress of the department, so there is said to be very little of them that would pass as a bona fide antique.

Still Ready for Action

The apparatus made a sad sight lined up, one back of the other, at Engine 6 headquarters at the head of Howard st. Stripped of their hose and buckets, the steam whistle silenced and the bells stilled except when some curious person came along and sounded it, the old apparatus looked anything but a part of Commissioner "Teddy" Glynn's up-to-the-minute fire fighting force. The glossy red paint of other days was dull and uninteresting. Though the old apparatus has been out of service from two to three years they looked ready for the next alarm today, for each piece had coal in her bunkers.

Auctioneer Foye was reluctant to start the sale, scheduled for 11 o'clock, until Commissioner Glynn arrived, but at 11:10 he called for bidding by mounting the driver's seat of old Engine 13, which did vallant service at the Cabot-st Fire House in Roxbury, and did its bit in extinguishing the big "ball grounds" fire of 1894. The old engine was drawn out to the front door of the fire house while cameramen from the newspapers snapped it for the last time. Old 13 looked faded—she was not perked up as in the days of yore.

The picture taken Mr Foye read the descriptions of the five pieces of apparatus and the automatic steam engine. The horse-drawn pieces were Engine 6, formerly of Leverett st; Engine 13, formerly of Roxbury; Engine 24, formerly of Warren st, Roxbury; Engine 27, formerly of Elm st, Charlestown, and Engine 40, formerly of East Boston.

Old Engine 6 was put in service in

1870, two years before the big Boston fire of 1872. It was described by the auctioneer as in good condition. The boiler was 10 years old. It was rebuilt in 1914.

Engine 13, purchased in 1890, was rebuilt in 1899. Its boiler is 25 years old.

Automatic Engine Not Shown

Engine 24, built in 1867, was rebuilt in 1904. Engine 27, built in 1890, was rebuilt in 1904. Engine 40 was put in service in 1906, and has a boiler 19 years old. It has never been rebuilt.

The automatic steam engine was not shown at the sale this morning, being a stationary engine at the Bureau of Supplies, on Bristol st, South End.

Although auctioneer Foye stood on old 13, he put Engine 6 under the red flag first. The bidding was started with \$50 and quickly jumped to \$85 and then \$100. Then it jumped by tens and fives until it passed the \$200 and the \$300 mark. Slowly the amount climbed to \$400 and then jumped to \$415. Then the bidding stopped and Mr Foye cried out, "What do I hear," several times, before he shouted, "\$415, \$415, \$415—sold to this man for \$415."

"I'll take them all, shouted back the man in the crowd. He was Nathan Franklin of 17 Grove st, Chelsea. Franklin put down \$200 in cash and said he would have the balance in an hour or so. Franklin wouldn't say what he intended to do with the old fire engines. He shrugged his shoulders and smiled wisely when the reporters asked him what prompted him to buy the old-timers.

"Are you going to scrap them," asked one of the reporters, and Franklin smiled again and said: "Well, I don't know."

Then Mr Foye put the automatic steam engine under the hammer. There was little interest in this sale. Finally he got an opening bid of \$5. Up she went to \$25, and then a man wanted to make it \$27.50, but Mr Foye said bids would have to come in \$5's and \$10's. Slowly he got a bid of \$30 and then \$35; then up to \$50, \$55 and \$60, and finally \$70. That was the dead line. Auctioneer Foye hated to let it go for \$70, but he took it and I. Steinberg, dealer in iron metal at 19 Addison st, Chelsea, put down \$15, with the promise he would return with the rest in short order. Steinberg said that he would scrap the old engine.