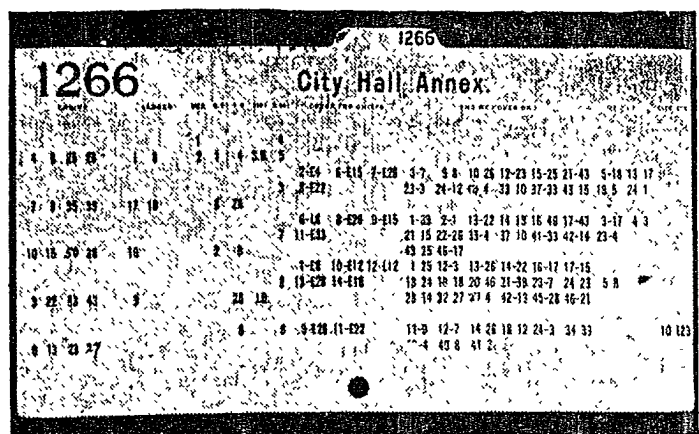
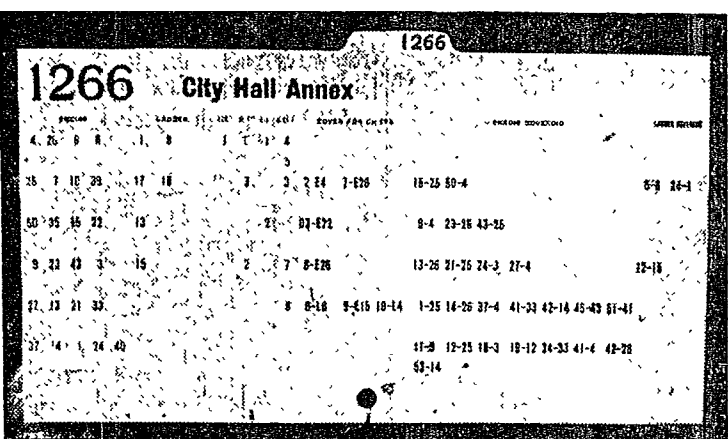


WHOLE YEAR NEEDED TO MAKE NEW FIRE DEPARTMENT RUNNING CARD

Motor Apparatus and High Pressure Service Reduce by Half the Runs Needed to "Cover" When Big Fire Calls Companies Away



THE OLD RUNNING CARD FOR BOX 1266



NEW RUNNING CARD FOR BOX 1266

With the placing in commission of the high pressure fire fighting water system a few days ago, there was also placed in service the new running card of the Boston Fire Department which, in the event of a big fire, means more than a 50 percent reduction in the movement of fire-fighting apparatus.

Not until this "Bible," as it is known in the department, was issued did the value of motor-propelled apparatus become really known. The moving of big pumping engines 50 miles over the road in zero weather to assist a community endangered by a conflagration is now a possibility, but the real value to Boston is in the ability to handle a big fire and keep all sections of the city protected.

With horses hauling the machines, a five-alarm fire—which was the highest arranged for below a general alarm under the old system—would mean the responding to the alarm to box 1266 of 20 engines, six ladder trucks, three water towers and nine chiefs, besides the fuel wagons, motor repair wagons and other auxiliary apparatus needed.

This fire-alarm box is taken as an example; it is located in the City Hall Annex.

Under the new system, with six alarms from the same box, Chief Walsh would have the services of 25 pumping engines, six ladder trucks, three water towers, one rescue company, with eight chiefs assisting in fighting the fire.

Due to Motor Apparatus

But the real worth would be in the fact that but 24 engines would change station during the sounding of these alarms, against 53; three ladder trucks against eight, and seven chiefs, against 15 in times past, which means leaving much apparatus in its home stations for duty.

The ability to work in this manner is due to the fact that it is possible to move a motor company four or five miles for covering purposes in a very few minutes, while with the horses it was necessary to move but a short distance at a time; otherwise the horses would not be fit for a "run" before they had a rest.

In the old days the sounding of the first alarm from the Annex would mean the response of Chief Walsh, Deputy Chief Fox, District Chiefs Shallow and Caulfield, with four engines, two ladders, Rescue I and Tower 1.

The second alarm would bring four more engines, two ladders, Tower 3 and District Chief O'Brien from Pittsburg st.

At the same time there would begin a complicated system of "covering," by which 12 engines would move toward the fire, to take the places of those that were at the fire and those that were moving one stage nearer. The details of these movements are of intense interest to the firemen, but would mean little to the reader.

Almost Every Company Moved

As each successive alarm was sounded under the old system, almost every company in the city would be involved. Those companies nearest would go to the fire, those a little farther would move in to the territory thus left, and those farther away would take their places.

Under the new system the same result is obtained by a much smaller number of company movements; instead of short stays toward the fire, motor companies from the suburban districts make longer runs past companies that do not move, greatly simplifying the movements and leaving many companies undisturbed.

For instance, on a third alarm only three companies come in to cover; Engine 23 comes from Northampton st all the way to Mason st, Engine 43 from Andrew sq to Fort Hill sq, and Engine 9 from East Boston to Bulfinch st. Under the old system companies would move from Ashmont, Jamaica Plain and Brighton, and nearly a dozen others inside of those districts.

The difference that motor apparatus and the high pressure service have made is shown by a study of the old and new running cards for box 1266.

Helped by Other Cities

If it is necessary to send out a general alarm, something that has not been done in Boston since the Albany-st fire in 1910, then the greatest move-

ment of apparatus on the entire card would follow. This would leave Boston, outside of the district where the fire was burning, protected by 14 engines and 18 ladder trucks of the Boston department, reinforced by apparatus from the adjoining cities and towns.

Winthrop Engine 2 and Chelsea Engine 1 would be in East Boston; Chelsea Engine 2 and Somerville Engine 2 in Charlestown; Somerville Engine 1 on Bulfinch st; Cambridge Engine 6, in the Back Bay; Brookline Combination A, in Longwood; Watertown Engine 1 and Newton Engine 1, in Brighton; Dedham Engine 1, in West Roxbury; Milton Engine 1 and Milton Ladder 1, in Dorchester Lower Mills; Quincy Engine 1, in Neponset.

By this arrangement the companies from outside of the city would be in position to not only take care of property in Boston, but, if needed, could return to their own cities or towns within a very few minutes.

Under the old system but 10 Boston engine companies would be in reserve with 14 ladder trucks, backed up by the same number of companies from out of town.

First Revision in 40 Years

This revision of the running card is the first complete change to be made since this system was first devised and put into effect in the Boston department about 40 years ago.

Many of the suburban districts that are now a part of Boston were separate municipalities, and the Boston fire alarm system had only 220 fire alarm boxes against the 1235 now in service and the many more that have been planned for.

For years slight changes have been made in the running card to care for new companies organized and placed in commission, and new boxes added to the system, but it was not until Commissioner John R. Murphy and Chief Peter E. Walsh issued the order more than a year ago that work was started in putting Boston on an up-to-date a basis as possible.

The first order that had the least appearance of an assignment card for apparatus was issued in 1861, and this order covered but two companies, Engine 2 being instructed not to leave South Boston, and Engine 1 ordered not to go south of Dover st.

The first fire alarm telegraph system in the world was placed in commission in Boston in 1852, but the firemen, not having confidence in it, refused to depend on this system of alarms and for many years after it was installed followed the old custom of rushing out whenever a bell was rung.

Whenever a Bell Rang

The records of the fire alarm office show that many times the department would respond to early church bells, town meetings bells in the neighboring towns, and a regular run was made to South Boston, where a bell foundry was located, whenever a new bell was completed and the workmen tested it.

In 1875 the first real assignment system was put into effect, but this covered only general alarm fires, and provided for the apparatus that responded to the fire and the companies that stayed at home to protect other districts.

At that time a third alarm was general and called out everybody. In 1880 the fourth alarm was made the general, the fifth in 1893, the sixth in 1896 and the seventh, which is now the general, when this card went into effect a few days ago.

Chief Walsh, by order of Commissioner Murphy, picked Capt William Swan of Ladder 15, Boylston and Hereford sts; Lieut John Leary, Ladder 12, Tremont st; John Flannan, operator at Fire Alarm Headquarters, and George Ames of Chief Walsh's staff at headquarters, as a corps of experts to build a new system.

These men were instructed to cut the covering of apparatus to the limit, move as few companies as possible on extra alarms, and instead of having covering companies move to the next nearest station, have the covering companies, now motorized, jump long distances.

Half a Million Moves

With this in view, the experts got to work and for one solid year moved engines and ladder trucks all over the city. It was estimated that more than 500,000 moves were made before the system was accepted.

In the office of Chief Walsh on Mason st, in the operating room of the Fire Alarm Bureau and in the commissioner's office, are hung large maps of the city, with every fire station located on it, with a tag for the engine or trucks, tower, chief or other apparatus

stationed in it.

It was with one of these big maps that Capt Swan and his assistants worked. They were assisted by Lieuts Timothy Donovan and John J. Kenney, aids to Chief Walsh, and time after time a section would be declared perfect by these workers and the card carried in to Chief Walsh, who in a minute would break it all to pieces by asking what was going to get to an alarm from a certain place within 10 minutes.

This question would mean the going over of the entire work on this card; and as this happened time after time, many officers and men in the depart-

ment wondered why these workers did not go insane.

The fact that they did not go insane and did their work in a real manner is proven by the results printed on the more than 225,000 cards required for the use of the department.

When these men finished with Boston, Capt Charles A. Donohue, department executive officer, and Lieut Leary visited every city and town adjoining Boston, discussed the covering situation with the chief and laid out a running card for Boston responding to fires in the different places, or for apparatus from these places coming in to render assistance to Boston.