

WELLS REMOVED, PARKER NEW FIRE COMMISSIONER

Change in Department Will Go Into Effect Saturday Morning.



BRIG GEN SAMUEL D. PARKER,
Chosen Fire Commissioner of Boston.

New Head Member of Governor's Staff and Well Known.

Benjamin W Wells was yesterday removed from the office of fire commissioner by Mayor Hibbard, who then appointed to the place Brig-Gen Samuel D. Parker of the governor's staff.

The removal of Mr Wells was said by the mayor in his communication to him to be "for the good of the service." It will take effect tonight, and the appointment of Gen Parker is for the unexpired portion of the three-year term, which will end April 30, 1910.

It is said that the reply Mr Wells made to the finance commission's chapter on the fire department hastened Mayor Hibbard's contemplated action.

Sec White of the mayor's office called on Commissioner Wells at fire headquarters yesterday morning, bearing the following communication from the mayor:

"Jan 30, 1908.

"Benjamin W. Wells, Esq. Fire Commissioner, Boston:

"Dear Sir—I have carefully read the report of the finance commission relative to the fire department, and have

carefully considered the communication which you have sent me with reference to the same, but am strongly of the opinion that the organization of the fire department at the present time is sadly lacking in discipline, and believe it is necessary that a new commissioner should be selected by me.

"Your resignation will be acceptable to this office.

"Respectfully, G. A. Hibbard, Mayor."

Commissioner Wells declined to accede to the mayor's request to resign and said so in the following letter:

"Jan 30, 1908.

"Hon George A. Hibbard, Mayor:

"Sir—Your communication of even date, containing a request for my resignation of the position of fire commissioner received, and I beg to make the following acknowledgment:

"I was appointed by the late Mayor Collins to fill the unexpired term of the late Commissioner Henry S. Russell. The appointment was not a political

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WELLS REMOVED, PARKER NAMED

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one, nor was my reappointment, which occurred May 1, 1907. The term is for three years, and I can see no reason for resigning at this time, the place not being a political one.

"There is nothing in the report of the finance commission which warrants any such conclusion, particularly taken in connection with the communication which I forwarded to you yesterday. There is no evidence that can be brought or that was furnished by the finance commission that the discipline at the present time is 'sadly lacking.' It is a statement made without authority and cannot be proven. The record of the department at fires stands for itself, and every person conversant with fire department matters will testify that the Boston fire department, in every branch, has never been a more efficient working organization than at the present time. Yours respectfully,

"Benj. W. Wells, Commissioner."

Sec White returned to city hall and soon after the following communication was sent to Commissioner Wells by a special messenger:

"Jan 30, 1908.

"Benjamin W. Wells, Esq., Fire Commissioner, Boston:

"Dear Sir—You are hereby removed from the office of fire commissioner of the city of Boston for the good of the service.

"Said removal to take effect on the 31st day of January, 1908. Yours truly,

"George A. Hibbard, Mayor."

The reply which Mr Wells made to the report of the finance commission, and which was published in full in the Globe yesterday afternoon, contained among other things an expression of the fire commissioner's belief that his critics were unfamiliar with the conditions they were called upon to investigate.

"The conclusion as regards political influence is phrased in a manner to mislead," he said. "The promotions were taken up almost one by one, and of 30, there were but two directly appointed at the request of the mayor, and in these there was no political consideration and the records of the men were excellent."

Mr Wells said he had not chosen to employ "spotters," but had made every other effort to eliminate drunkenness by punishing offenders as the evidence warranted. Mr Wells agreed that "the criticism of the Russell club is justified."

The reply then went into considerable detail to answer other criticisms made by the finance commission.

Gen Parker was notified late in the afternoon of his appointment. He accepted and notified the mayor's office that he will take charge of the department Saturday, Feb 1. The salary is \$700 a year.

Gen Parker's appointment does not require the confirmation of the aldermen.

The friends of James H. Smyth, a fire insurance man, are wondering how their candidate happened to be overlooked. Capt Smyth was on the preferred list, but the name of Gen Parker happened to be ahead of his. Maj Quimby, an old hoseman, was crowded out of the contest days ago. Ex-Adjt Gen James L. Parker was in line for the position, but declined.

There were many other candidates for the position, but in the boiling down process in the mayor's office only two remained when a selection had to be made yesterday, Parker and Smyth.

Just before his inauguration Mayor Hibbard told the selection of a man for the position of fire commissioner before the fire underwriters of Boston. As about every underwriter in the city had his own candidate, the mayor decided to make his own selection.

Gen Parker has the reputation of being a strict though not severe officer. The man who does his duty and does it well need not fear for his job

REGRET AMONG FIREMEN.

Officials and Men of the Department
Sorry That Commissioner Wells
is to Leave Them.

Declaring that he had nothing new to say, Commissioner Wells continued his duties at fire headquarters yesterday afternoon just as if he had not been removed.

As the commissioner was removing the blanket of Bob, his Boston terrier, who also loses his headquarters berth as official mascot, Chief Mullen entered his office and said there were a few of the "boys" waiting outside who wished to have a parting word with their leader.

The fire commissioner was surprised and there was an affecting scene when the chief, the deputy and district chiefs, the heads of the repair shops, fire alarm service and veterinary hospital entered Mr Wells' office, saluted him and shook his hand.

Besides Chief Mullen there were present Deputy Chiefs Grady and McDonough, District Chiefs Godbold, Pope, Fox, Sennott, Perkins, Kennedy, Ryan, Mulligan and Porter, the latter representing the repair shop; supervisor of engines E. M. Byington, Supt Brown S. Flanders and chief operator Richard Donahue of the fire alarm service and Dr Stimpson from the department hospital.

The superior officers told Mr Wells how much they admired him and regretted his departure. In his brief address to the officers the commissioner thanked them for the support they had given him and urged them to put forth their best efforts at all times in the future.

There was general regret in fire cir-

cles when it was announced that the commissioner had been removed.

To be fire commissioner had always been the ambition of Mr Wells. When a student at Harvard, he became interested in the fire department and he told Samuel Elliot, his companion, who has since died and whose ambition was to some day be mayor of Boston, that he would be content with being its fire commissioner. Mr Elliot told Mr Wells that when he became mayor he would appoint him to that office, but Mr Elliot died young.

Mr Wells was named by Mayor Collins as fire commissioner March 20, 1905. He succeeded Patrick J. Kennedy, fire commissioner, who had been the acting fire commissioner from the time of Col Russell's death.

STRICT DISCIPLINARIAN.

Gen Parker is 39 Years Old, Unmarried, Conscientious in Duty and Courtly in Manner.

The new fire commissioner, Brig Gen Samuel D. Parker, is among the best known militia officers of the country.

Gen Parker was born in Milton Sept 9, 1868, and he has spent much of his life in that town. He is the son of Charles Henry Parker, who was treasurer of the Suffolk savings bank for many years. His father is the oldest living graduate of Harvard. Gen Parker attended the public schools of Milton and was graduated from Harvard in the class of 1891. In college he took an active part in athletics, captained his class crew and rowed on the varsity eight.

He was a member of the 1st corps of cadets, in which he served four years, and when battery A was organized in 1895 he was made sergeant and in 1897 lieutenant. Later he was elected captain. In the fall of 1905 he was appointed assistant inspector general with the rank of lieutenant colonel by Gov Guild, and a few weeks ago he was made inspector general with the rank of brigadier general.

Commissioner Parker is an active member of the Norfolk hunt club and has been conspicuous in its undertakings for many years. He has been master of the hounds, and is an enthusiastic horseman. He is a bachelor and lives with his brother, Charles H. Parker Jr, and his sister, Miss Ellen G. Parker, at 33 Chestnut st. He is a member of the Union University, Athletic, Somerset, Country and Dedham clubs. His business is that of a real estate broker.

His friends confidently expect he will bring back into the fire department that semimilitary type of efficiency which characterized Col Russell's administration. Commissioner Parker is a strict disciplinarian, conscientious in the performance of his duty, and a kindly, courtly gentleman on all occasions.