

HOW THE REST OF BOSTON IS PROTECTED IN A BIG FIRE

By a Complicated System of "Covering" Movements, No Section Is Left Without an Adequate Number of Fire Fighters, Even When Half the Force Is at Work on One Conflagration.

1463 Chauncy Street and Rowe Place.										
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							8-E22	22-26 23-3 24-12 27-6 33-10 37-33	18-14 19-5	
3	10 35 39	3 18	3	7						
							1-L8 8-E26 11-E33	1-39 2-1 13-22 14-13 16-46 17-43	23-4	
								21-15 27-4 33-26 37-10 41-33 42-14	24-1	
6	15 22 38	1	2	3						
							9-E15 10-E12 12-L12	1-25 12-3 13-26 14-22 16-17 17-15		
							6 13-E28 14-E18	18-24 19-18 20-46 21-39 23-7 24-23	5-8	
8	27 33 43	18			10	J.D.				
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THE ASSIGNMENT CARD FOR MONDAY MORNING'S BIG FIRE

The system by which Peter F. McDonough, chief of the Boston Fire Department, last Monday morning called to fight the big fire on Chauncy st 22 pumping engines, six ladder trucks, two chemical engines, three water towers, two deputy chiefs and six district chiefs, besides the crews from the repair shops and fire alarm branch, is considered by all expert fire fighters to be the best in the country.

This rating is given the system for the reason that, while all this force of apparatus is going to the fire, more than a score of other companies are moving about the city proper and the suburban districts to different stations, so that at no time is any district without adequate protection against an ordinary fire that might start.

Whether the system of assigning different companies to respond and to "cover" during an "extra alarm" fire originated in Boston cannot be learned, but it is conceded by all firemen who have visited the city and studied the system that it has been improved here and brought to the point of practical perfection.

The fact that 22 pumping engines, with a combined normal capacity of more than 17,000 gallons a minute, six trucks with 265 feet of ladders, and two chemical engines with about 300 gallons of chemical solution, besides the other apparatus used for fire fighting, can be, with their crews at work in less than 20 minutes, while at the same time other apparatus is locating so as to protect the entire city, proves that the rating given it is not misplaced.

Making the Assignment Cards

There were still left 23 engines and three fireboats for other fires, while the six ladder trucks at the big fire left 35 others ready for duty practically all of them equipped with chemical tanks, and the two chemical engines left 12 of that type.

This part of the operation of the Fire Department is entirely under the direction of Chief McDonough and his son and aid, Edward McDonough, who has full charge of the assignment of companies, not only to alarms but under all circumstances, with the operators in the fire alarm office sending his orders over the telephone in situations arise that are not covered by the regular running card.

To make out these assignment cards is one of the hardest jobs that can be put on a man, for he has to make allowance for every section of the city, from the tip of Hyde Park to the tip of Charlestown, from the Brighton-Newton line to that between East Boston and Winthrop, from the Neponset River to the Charles.

The man making the covering schedule must know the class and construction of the buildings, whether used for residences or for manufacturing, and whether so low that ordinary hydrant streams could reach their tops or so high as to call for engine streams.

When the buildings are low he can depend on one engine, a ladder truck with its chemical tanks and a combination wagon with the big hose and chemical tanks for the ordinary fire, but where the buildings are of more than ordinary height he must provide for at least a couple of engines to respond to an alarm.

No Place Left Unprotected

Everything of this nature has been considered in making out the assignment cards now in use, and it is a proof of their value that the fire discovered in the Grove Hall District Monday morning, although of a serious nature, was handled in good shape by the crews that responded to the alarm from the "covering" stations.

The system in use takes care that no principal station will be uncovered for more than a few minutes, for all apparatus starts at the same time.

It has all been brought to such a state of perfection now that the chief and his aids know at any time just about where each company should be while on the road, whether on a fire run or on a covering run. They know the streets over which the apparatus will be driven, for all drivers use the shortest and best route for their move.

When the first alarm sounded from box 1463, which is located at the corner



Chief Beat Some of the Companies

In the stations in the downtown districts the patrol looked at the company running card, and, as soon as he saw it was a run for his company, with one finger he pressed the light switch, turning on every light in the house, and with another pressed the "house gong," which awakened every man. In the houses where the apparatus is still horse-drawn, he reached for the "horsepull" and started the horses as soon as the first man "hit the floor" from the bunk rooms above.

This was the action of the patrol men in the quarters of Engine 4 on Bulfinch st, which serves also for the crews of Chemical 1 and Tower 1 in the same station, in Engine 7, East st; Engine 23 and Ladder 8, Fort Hill sq, and Chemical 2, Church st. With the apparatus came by schedule Acting Deputy Chief Ryder and Acting District Chief Cain from Pittsburg st.

The crews of Engine 26 from Mason st, with District Chief Coulter, and of Ladder 17 from Harrison av were already on their way to the fire, in response to an automatic alarm. They would have made part of the first alarm force, and, as Engine 26 was out of quarters, Engine 25, the big horseless engine, responded to the bell alarm.

Chief McDonough does not take his regular "day off in five" with the rest of the fire-fighters, but spends his Sundays with his family at their home in Charlestown. He has a tapper in the house, and when the alarm struck he turned out just as quickly as if sleeping "in quarters" and made a remarkable run to the fire, reaching the scene before all the first alarm companies were at work.

Warned by Second Alarm

When the second alarm struck so soon after the first practically the entire department "got onto its toes," knowing that it must be a big fire to call for an extra alarm before the officer in charge could have time to go in to investigate.

The striking of the second alarm brought Engine 3 from Harrison av, 10 from Mt Vernon st, and 29 from Congress st, 35 having already gone; Ladders 3 from Harrison av and 13 from Warren av, Tower 3 from Pittsburg st and District Chief Shalloo from Bulfinch st.

The drivers of Engines 28 and 7 meanwhile had in turn taken the horses from their engines and started after coal wagons to supply the engines with fuel. On subsequent alarms this would be the duty successively of the drivers of Engines 2, 10 and 25.

As the second alarm companies left their downtown quarters to respond to the fire, the process of "covering" began. Engine 6, on Leverett st, went to 4's house on Bulfinch st, and was in turn covered by 7 from Elm st, Charlestown. Engine 15 left Dorchester av

and Broadway, South Boston, for 7's house on East st, but was covered by 43 from Andrew sq, South Boston, and that house by 21 from Columbia road, Dorchester.

Engine 8 left Salem st for 25's house in Fort Hill sq and was covered by Engine 9 from Paris st, East Boston. Engine 23 left Northampton st for 3's house, on Harrison av, being replaced by 12 on Dudley st, Roxbury, and that by 24 on Warren st. Engine 22 moved from Warren av, down to the Mason-st house, and 33 left Boylston st for Mt Vernon st, being covered by 37 from Longwood av.

All Over the City

At the same time Ladder 4 left Dudley st for 3's house, on Harrison av, being covered by 23 from Grove Hall, and Ladder 18, which went from Pittsburg st to replace 5, at Fort Hill sq, was succeeded by Ladder 5 from 1th st, South Boston, and that by Ladder 19, from City Point.

District Chief Walsh started from Warren av for Mason st. District Chief Gaffney from Tremont st, Roxbury, to Warren av, Jordan from Dorchester st, Boston, Dorchester av and Broadway, and McDonald from Charlestown to Bulfinch st.

With the striking of three blows, followed by the box number, the crews of Engine 6 from Bulfinch st, 15 at East st and 22 at Mason st, which had covered on the previous alarm, went to the fire with Engine 28, the second horseless, from its quarters on Congress st; Ladder 1 from Friend st, Tower 2 from Bristol st and District Chief Walsh, advancing from Mason st.

District Chief Caulfield left East Boston to cover Fort Hill sq, Gaffney moved from Warren av to Mason st and Fox from Brighton to 3's house on Boylston st. Ladder 21 left North Grove st to cover the North and West Ends from the Friend-st quarters.

The moving up of the engines continued. Engine 13 advanced from Dorchester av and Broadway to East st, being succeeded by 21 from Andrew sq, that by 17 from Meeting House Hill, that in turn by 16 from Ashmont, and the latter by 16, from Dorchester Lower Mills.

Filling the Nearest Houses

So, too, Engine 23, going to Mason st from Mt Vernon st, was replaced by 37 from Boylston st and that by 41 from Harvard av, Brighton. Engine 1 moved up from Dorchester st South Boston, to Congress st, and was covered by 1 from City Point. Engine 13 came down from Cabot st, Roxbury, to Warren av, while 11 moved into Cabot st from Center st, and the latter house was filled by 42 from Egleston Square. Engine 27 advanced from the Leverett-st house to Bulfinch st.

The fourth alarm brought to the fire Deputy Chief Sennott from his quarters on Dudley st, Roxbury. District Chief Jordan from Engine 15's house, and Engines 2 from Fort Hill sq, 7 from Bulfinch st, 23 from Mason st and 33 from East st, with Ladder 18 from Fort Hill sq.

Again the nearest houses were filled and apparatus moved in towards the

city's center. Engine 13 took the vacancy at Mason st, being succeeded at Warren av by Engine 14 from Cabot st, that by 42 from Center st, to replace which 28 was moved from its home station in Jamaica Plain, and covered there by 45 from West Roxbury.

Engine 23 went from Harrison av to East st, being succeeded by 12 from Northampton st and that by 24 from Dudley st. Engine 1 left Congress st for Fort Hill sq, its place being taken by 21 from Broadway and that by 17 from Andrew sq. Engine 46 advanced from Meeting House Hill to Columbia road, and in succession 16 moved up from Ashmont and 20 from Neponset. Engine 18 moved from its home station on Harvard st, Dorchester, to Warren st, and was covered by 19 from Mattapan. Engine 36 left its home at Monument sq, Charlestown, for Bulfinch st, and 32 advanced in Charlestown from Bunker Hill st to Elm st. Ladder 5 moved from Pittsburg st to Fort Hill sq.

From Brighton and East Boston

Dist Chief Kenney left Dudley st to look after South Boston from the quarters of Engine 15, Broadway. Dist Chief McLean moved in from Harvard st, Dorchester, to Dudley st. Dist Chief Mulligan from Center st, Jamaica Plain, to Ladder 12, Fremont st. Dist Chief Kennedy from West Roxbury to Jamaica Plain, and Dist Chief Heffernan from Ashmont to Harvard st.

Four more engines responded on the fifth alarm—1 from Fort Hill sq, 12 from Harrison av, 13 from Mason st and 23 from East st—and with them went Dist Chief Gaffney from Mason st.

In All, 58 Companies Responded

The location of apparatus described above, including everything from the district chiefs to the chemical engines, was such that, while practically half of the department was engaged in fighting the big blaze, the other half was so spread about the city that no section was without proper protection.

Past Boston had left two engines: a couple of ladder trucks and a chemical, with Revere and Winthrop ready to respond to alarms from that district. Charlestown had an engine, two ladder trucks and two chemicals, with Chelsea and Somerville ready to respond; Brighton had two engines, three trucks and Cambridge, Newton and Brookline to respond on; South Boston, 11 engines, four trucks and a couple of chemicals, besides Milton and Quincy. South Boston had three engines, a couple of trucks and a chemical, and all other sections of the city were covered in about the same proportion.

Besides all the crews brought to the fire from the preliminary automatic alarm to the final telephoning after the fifth alarm, themselves coming originally from points as far distant as Charlestown, East Boston, Andrew sq and Center st, there were moved in covering runs 19 other pumping engines in every section of the city, five ladder trucks and one chemical.

From first to last, then, the fire called

for the movement of 41 engines, 11 ladder trucks, three chemical engines and three water towers, a total of 58 companies exclusive of the various chiefs.

It is to be noted, too, that in "covering" for this fire, as for all extra alarm fires, the stations nearest the blaze on all sides were always kept supplied. In this instance Mason st, East st, Bulfinch st, or Harrison av and Congress st or Fort Hill sq—so that, when there should be a need for a new battalion of apparatus, the run might be short.

A report to Chief McDonough that the fire had spread into an adjoining building and required the services of two more engines, resulted in his calling by telephone Engines 9 from Fort Hill sq and 14 from Mason st, raising the total to 22, but later investigation showed there was not fire enough to warrant their calling.

There was not such general covering