

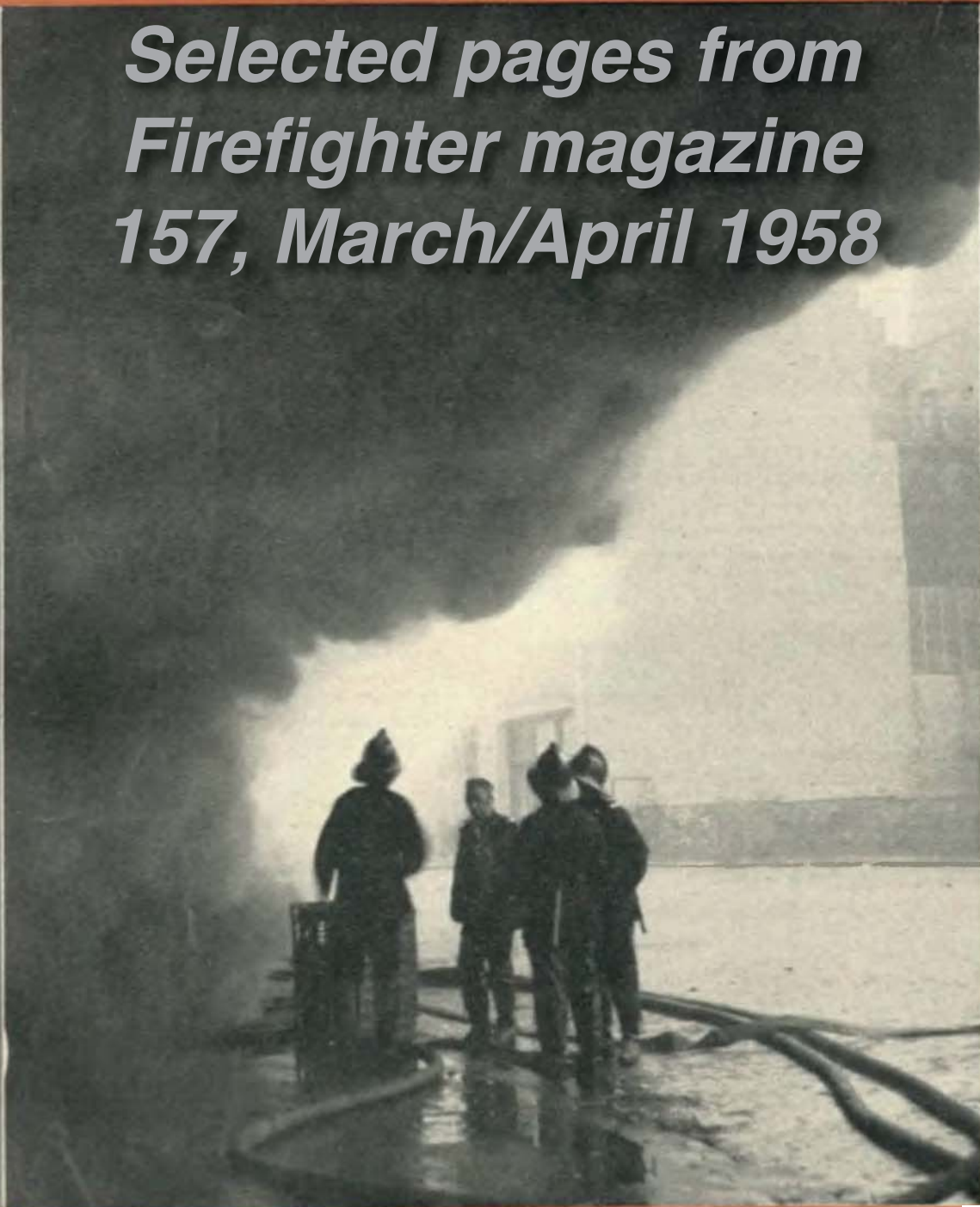
# FIREFIGHTER

**JOURNAL OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION**

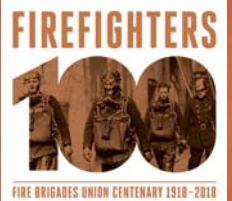
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WHAT HAPPENED AT SMITHFIELD?  
FIREWOMEN'S PAY  
REVIEW OF UNION POLICY  
NEW STATION OFFICERS' EXAM.





# What happened at Smithfield?

**O**FFICERS and men in every Brigade have been asking how it came about that in the London Fire Brigade with its unique knowledge of fighting fires in underground premises and with the major fire at the Tottenham Court Road Underground shelters in 1956 fresh in its experience, two men were fatally missed at a fire. We set out below a number of the outstanding features of these puzzling circumstances which were disclosed at the three day Inquest held by the City Coroner on the deaths of our comrades Station Officer Fourn-Wells and Fireman Stocking. In an Editorial comment in this number we make it clear that so far as the Union is concerned we approach these problems fully understanding the heavy duties which fall upon officers in the initial stages of fighting a difficult fire. But just because these early moments are so full of arduous responsibility for Officers in charge of firefighting, it is more than necessary that those improvements in system, training and equipment which can be made, shall be undertaken without delay. It is in that spirit that we ask and seek to answer the following questions which we know are in the minds of our members.

The time of the original call was 0218½ hours. Times are sometimes all important in seeking to give an accurate picture of developing events at a fire. The times available were only approximate since all witnesses at the Inquest had great difficulty in assessing accurately the actual time at which various incidents occurred. Thus it was never clearly established at what time

- (1) the men were discovered to be missing
- (2) search procedure was put into operation, and
- (3) the bodies were actually discovered.

The Headquarters Log was produced as well as a Control Unit Log maintained at the fire. Although according to Brigade Order 185/14(6)

the Control Unit Log Book "should also record any vital incidents relating to the fire, e.g. injuries to personnel, etc. etc.," no such entries were ever presented for inspection.

*Q. How were these men lost?*

A. Five men in a crew headed by Station Officer Fourn-Wells were ordered to search a chamber leading from the engine room providing cold air for the refrigeration chambers. They were ordered to find a door leading to these chambers. The smoke was thick, but not very thick. After 45 minutes they found the door, opened it and wedged it open. Three men reported very low sets and returned to surface level. In evidence it was said that these men anticipated that Fourn-Wells and Stocking would follow after having briefly inspected the ground inside the door.

Fourn-Wells, a very experienced Fire Officer with little oxygen left in his set took the fatal step of entering the tunnel leading at right angles from the exit-entry passage. It can be assumed that in seeking to find his way back he made the mistake of turning not into the exit/entry passage, but into the chamber next to the passage, found his way blocked and there died. Fireman Stocking continued to the end of the tunnel at right angles to the exit-entry passage and was found spread-eagled against the end wall. (See accompanying plan).

*Q. Why did no-one immediately report the fact that they were missing?*

A. Because no-one knew they were missing. On emerging at street level the Leading Fireman among the three men who did come out changed his set on the E.T. He returned some time later (period unspecified) to the stairway leading to the basement. He gave evidence that he asked "some-one" if he had seen Station Officer Fourn-Wells. On receiving "No" for an answer, he in evidence, said that he told an A.D.O. that Fourn-Wells had not been seen. It is not clear who gave orders for search

procedure or at what time these orders were given. It is clear that no record of the names or of the number of men in the basement at this time was available. No control procedure had been set up. It was accepted at the Inquest that until the Control Unit came on at 0356 hours no control procedure was in force. In evidence the Divisional Officer in charge of the proceedings at this time agreed, under cross examination, that until the Control Unit took over every man looked after himself. The only reference which could be found in any Log to the effect that someone was missing was an entry in the Walkie-Talkie Log "0427. Station Officer Fourn-Wells are (sic) missing at about 04.10." No reference was made anywhere in any Log to Fireman Stocking, except a message to Lambeth, by R.T.20 at 0517 reporting that "Station Officer Fourn-Wells and Fireman Stocking overcome by smoke had been removed by ambulance to hospital." The House Surgeon at the Inquest gave evidence that he certified them as dead at 0500 hours, having previously received them at St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

*Q. Were their sets in order?*

A. The sets were removed to Lambeth and there tested. An Officer gave evidence that both cylinders when found were empty but that the sets otherwise were in good working order. Evidence was given that when Fourn-Wells was found he had no head gear, his mouthpiece and nose-clip were off. Stocking was properly rigged in every detail. Pathological evidence was given to the effect that Stocking had 63% carbon monoxide absorption and Fourn-Wells 67%. Thus, although Stocking's mouthpiece and noseclip were in place the degree of carbon monoxide absorption was almost equal to that of the Station Officer, who I would assume, knowing his bottle was empty, decided to take a chance in the smoke. The Pathologist, Dr. C. Keith Simpson, cross-examined, said on the evidence of carbon monoxide inhalation "There

*continued*



## WHAT HAPPENED AT SMITHFIELD?—

*continued*

must have been either a displaced respirator or a perforated or otherwise defective respirator or one that admitted carbon monoxide or soot particles."

Q. Were they using lines?

A. No. An Order exists in the London Fire Brigade to the effect that

A. Who knows? The Leading Fireman mentioned above gave evidence that when he returned to the basement he found another Station Officer and his crew there. Whether this Station Officer and his crew would have heard anything had the two men been equipped with some signalling device is a matter of conjecture. What is clear is that no device was available to them. In the London Fire Brigade a decision

they are outside the scope of the London Building Acts. It can be assumed that they had never been inspected for fire prevention. The Chief Engineer at the Market said that he could only remember one visit in the last twenty years which he thought was in the very early days of the war. Certainly no one at Clerkenwell, officer or man, has been produced who can say that he knew about these extraordinary complex warrens of underground chambers which obviously constituted a very serious danger in case of fire.

Q. Was a plan available to the Brigade?

A. None was produced until some three and a quarter hours after the fire had been discovered.

Q. Why was there no control of B.A. wearers?

A. In the London Fire Brigade it is the practice of the Control Unit with its elaborate procedure and staff to come on after pumps have been made five or more. In this case the attendance was four pumps and the E.T. The Chief Officer said that Fourt-Wells could have ordered the Control Unit if he had thought it was necessary. Clearly Mr. Delve must have been referring in his own mind to the Senior Officer, because Fourt-Wells was only in charge of firefighting for a very few minutes as he was quickly followed on to the fire by the A.D.O. and D.O.

The Coroner's verdict was Death by misadventure. He made no recommendation with regard to the pip horn because of the fact that the Chief Officer gave evidence that there was division of expert opinion in the Service on this matter. The Coroner expressed pleasure, however, at Mr. Delve's statement that possibly within the next three weeks a device will be fitted to B.A. sets giving a warning signal of low oxygen content and recommended accordingly.

The Union was represented by Miss Rose Heilbron, Q.C. and by Mr. D. Turner-Samuels, Barrister and by our Solicitors, Messrs. W. H. Thompson. A special tribute should be paid to Brother Stan Crisp, Executive Council member for London, for his excellent work in assisting to collate all the essential information which was used by the Union's Counsel during the proceedings.

JOHN HORNER,  
General Secretary.



Exhausted but Safe!

[Reuter Photo]

the use of lines "should be discouraged." In evidence the Chief Officer said this Order was no longer operative after the Tottenham Court Road fire two years ago. No tapes or hobbin lines are used in the London Fire Brigade. Expert evidence was given that reliance was usually placed upon hose-reels or lengths of hose. In this case the hose reel had come to an end some considerable distance from the door which was being sought and through which the two dead men entered.

Q. Would a pip horn have saved them?

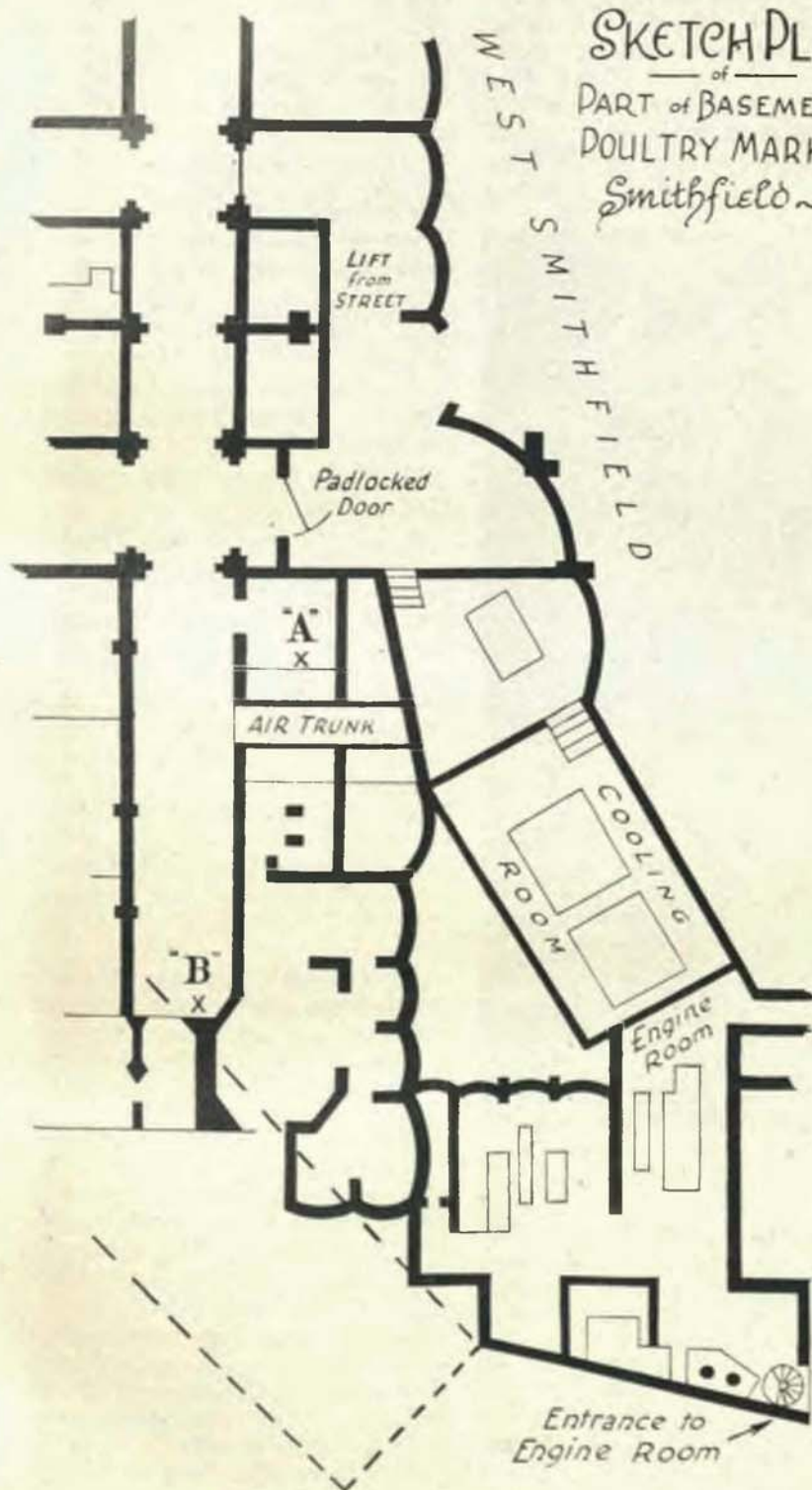
has been taken against giving the B.A. men any indicator or any signalling device indicating his need for help. (See page 10).

Q. Did Fourt-Wells, as local Station Officer in charge, know of these basements and their dangers?

A. Probably not. No evidence was given that in the course of his career at Clerkenwell, Station Officer Fourt-Wells had visited the actual basements, although records show that from time to time he had visited the Central Meat Markets which extend over an area of ten acres. As the Central Markets are in the City of London



# SKETCH PLAN of PART of BASEMENT DOULTRY MARKET Smithfield



THE sketch plan on this page represents the part of the Smithfield basement probably searched by Station Officer Fourn-Wells and Fireman Stocking. The basement proper stretched to the left of the plan. This basement consisted of some two and a half acres of galleries and cold storage compartments, some of which were internally sub-divided. About 800 tons of meat and poultry were in store. The basement was divided by the roof of a disused railway tunnel passing diagonally through it. The broken lines at the foot of the plan opposite indicate the direction of the tunnel. The entrance to the basement was made by the Brigade down the spiral staircase leading into the Engine room, marked in the plan. Station Officer Fourn-Wells and his crew were instructed to search for a "padlocked door," the key of which had been given to the Officer in Charge by a market employee. Considerable difficulty was experienced in finding this door, which incidently was covered by a tarpaulin, and it would appear that some 45 minutes was occupied in the search. Fourn-Wells was accompanied by 4 firemen and when the door was found it was opened and wedged back. Three members of the crew pointed out to Station Officer Fourn-Wells that their sets were very low and they returned to street level. Fourn-Wells and Stocking were seen to pass through the door and were never again found alive.

Fourn-Wells was discovered at the point marked "A," Stocking at "B." It may be presumed that Fourn-Wells instead of passing through the doorway which he had himself unlocked, turned into the wrong entry and found himself blocked in the chamber. Stocking had gone forward and met the dead end of the tunnel. With the expiration of the oxygen and their loss of direction they were then overcome.

The hosereel had been brought into the engine room and cooling room, but its length had expired many yards before the door in question. No tapes, lines or pip horns were in use.



# F.B.U. and N.A.F.O. hear Report on Smithfield

A MEETING of Union Station representatives along with the London District Committee of the National Association of Fire Officers heard the General Secretary, Brother John Horner, give a report on the 3 day proceedings of the Smithfield Inquest. Keen interest was shown in the model signalling device which was on exhibition. This device, now in its elementary stages, meets the need of an audible signal on the oxygen content, coupled with use as a distress signal. The pip horn in use in an adjoining Brigade was also demonstrated. The following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Station representatives present:

"This meeting of London representatives of the Fire Brigades Union, having heard the report of the General Secretary on the fatal fire at Smithfield, calls upon the Executive Council of the Fire Brigades Union to take immediate steps to ensure that adequate B.A. control is set up at any fire as soon as Breathing Apparatus is used. Furthermore, that until audible warning devices are invented for introduction into existing B.A. the Pip Horn should be fitted on all B.A. sets. We ask the Executive Council to take immediate steps towards this end. This meeting also demands the immediate introduction of head gear or helmet which will provide adequate

head protection to wearers of B.A. sets."

Station Officer Brand, N.A.F.O. Chairman, London District, expressed the sympathetic support of the National Association of Fire Officers and reminded the gathering of the fact that at the recent meeting of the special Breathing Apparatus Committee at the Home Office, the National Association of Fire Officers and the Fire Brigades Union had worked together in urging the adoption of various developments in improving our work in the whole field of Breathing Apparatus. Station Officer Brand referred to the decision of the London Working Party on Breathing Apparatus and said that while there should be no recriminations, we must all learn by our experience.

SUB Officer Paine, Junior Officer representative on the London District of the Fire Brigades Union, was unable to be present at the Report-back meeting of Station representatives and sent the following letter:—

Dear John,

I regret very much that I am unable to be at the meeting with you to-night.

You already know of my views in regard to this Breathing Apparatus question but, having sat through two days of the inquest hearing, I feel that our attitude and approach on this most important matter, must be somewhat stiffened.

How can we, logically, accept that control of Breathing Apparatus wearers, before the arrival of the Control Unit (at pumps 5 or more) is something that is impractical and unwarranted. Are the efforts and, maybe, the lives of personnel making the initial entry, less valuable than those who may be required to follow. There is, I feel, no case against the establishment of some immediate, simple but effective control where the use of Breathing Apparatus is necessary.

## NO GUARDIAN ANGELS!!

Does the arrival of the control unit surround the fireman, wherever he may be, with throngs of guardian angels, does some mysterious presence whisper in the Breathing Apparatus Operator's ear that all is well? I fear that neither is the case. I do not put these questions lightly, for I do feel acutely on this question of control and its efficiency. It just is not sufficient to delegate control duties to individuals and then to assume that by some divine ordinance, every movement and every action is then sublimely guided and directed.

You know of my own experience at Smithfield, and my criticisms of the manner of control there, even at a late stage in the operations.

Regarding the promised fitting of some form of alarm. When will the thoughts of those who sit in judgment be diverted into channels of considering causes of collapse other than diminishing oxygen supply. The proposed device recommended by the

Coroner as I understand it, gives warning only when the oxygen supply is reduced to near danger limits. It will protect, to a limited degree only, the over-zealous operator. That circumstance, whilst meriting consideration, is one which, I suggest, is less likely. A Breathing Apparatus Operator may collapse, may be rendered unconscious due to almost unlimited causes, even in the very early stages. With the proposed device, it would seem that such individuals may be left to lie until the oxygen supply runs low and the alarm is actuated. That could, very likely, be much too late.

I stress that such limited functions of an alarm are wholly unsatisfactory. We require and demand something with wider possibilities.

Very best wishes to you all.

Yours fraternally,

"WHACKER" PAINE,  
Sub. Officer, London Fire Brigade



# NEW B.A. COMMITTEE AT WORK

**I**MMEDIATELY after the Smithfield fire the Executive Council wrote to the Home Office asking for an emergency meeting of the Advisory Council to go into the whole question of B.A. Control and Procedure. An informal meeting took place between the Assistant Under Secretary, the Chief Inspector and the Union, as a result of which it was decided to set up a Special Committee forthwith.

Subsequently, the Union wrote to the Home Office as follows:—

11th February, 1958.

The Secretary,  
C.F.B.A.C.,  
Home Office.

Dear Sir,

On the 29th January my Executive Council instructed me to write to you requesting that you call an emergency meeting of the Advisory Council to examine the methods employed in various Brigades to maintain control over Breathing Apparatus crews at fires. My Executive Council has now instructed me to express their pleasure at the receipt of your letter of the 7th February in which you inform us that the Chairman has decided to convene a Committee of the Council to consider this and other related matters.

My Union will be represented on this Committee by the President, Mr. J. Burns, and by the General Secretary, Mr. J. Horner.

We would desire, among other matters, to bring to the attention of the Committee the following points:

1. There is an urgent need for the establishment of some common system of operational control at fires of Breathing Apparatus Crews, which will be obligatory upon all brigades. Such a procedure should be enforceable upon every Authority in order to ensure that there should be no confusion in any incident involving Brigades under re-inforcement schemes. This control procedure to operate from the entry of the first crew.

2. The enforceable adoption by all Brigades of an audible signalling device enabling the wearer to give

signals as to his whereabouts and physical condition.

3. The adoption of a device which will give audible indication of the state of the cylinder. We are informed that at Smithfield recently, the atmospheric content was such that the gauges could not be read.

4. The Design and Development Committee has under consideration the design of the Apparatus. We shall be representing that this matter be dealt with, with greater urgency than has hitherto been evidenced.

5. Steps to be taken to obtain information with regard to premises involving risks which in the circumstances of a smoky fire would involve dangers for Breathing Apparatus wearers. We are informed that at the Smithfield fire an accurate plan of the basement, in which two members of the Service lost their lives, was not available for some considerable time after the outbreak of fire.

We shall be glad to supplement these matters at the meeting of the Committee.

JOHN HORNER.

The first meeting of this body took place on the 28th February. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Mr. H. M. Smith, was in the Chair. The various bodies on the Advisory Council were represented and amongst those present were the Chief Officers of York, Birmingham, Manchester, Southampton, London, Wiltshire and Worcestershire. The L.C.C. were also represented by the Head of their Scientific Department, Dr. Burgess. A preliminary discussion took place on all the matters raised by the Union. There was on all sides a lively concern and an anxiety to bring about radical changes in the design of the set and to institute an elementary control procedure common to all Brigades. On communication it was felt that work would have to go on into the question of providing short wave radio, built into new full or partial face masks. The whole question of training facilities is to be examined. One Chief Officer said that he felt our method of training B.A. men could only be compared to training frogmen in the clear waters of the

swimming bath to work in the murky depths of a dock or canal. Various preliminary proposals were discussed on the question of providing an automatic signalling device. Meanwhile, agreement was reached on a motion by the F.B.U., seconded by N.A.F.O. to recommend to the Advisory Council the compulsory adoption of the Pip Horn as a temporary measure to be replaced when approved mechanical devices are available. These devices will give warning as to the state of the cylinders as well as being available for the man to give indication of his need for assistance and of his whereabouts. The Committee will resume on March 26th.

## IT DOESN'T ADD UP!

This is the age which has given mankind the Z.E.T.A., which reproduces the heat of the sun's surface. This is the age which has launched the SPUTNIK. But in the Fire Service our Breathing Apparatus set has remained substantially unchanged for over 40 years. Made of leather, canvas and steel it weighs 34 lbs. The wearer, cut off from ready communication, is automatically isolated. We still use the nose-clip and mouthpiece. After the death of Station Officer Fisher at the first Covent Garden fire, the Design and Development Committee were asked to examine the possibility of an alternative to the mouthpiece and nose-clip.

That was eight years ago!





# What happened to the Pip Horn?

**A**FTER Leading Fireman Willoughby was lost in London in 1956, the Fire Brigades Union on the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council Design and Development Committee raised the question of some device being incorporated in Breathing Apparatus sets which would automatically give warning to others in the event of the wearer being in distress. The report from the Committee to the full Advisory Council said "The pip horn warning device is not the answer where the

man in distress becomes unconscious or helpless and it may be helpful in a case where for some reason a man is separated from his companion, or both he and his companion are trapped but are rendered unconscious." When this matter came before the Advisory Council in July, 1956, the Union strongly urged that pip horns should be introduced into every Brigade not yet using them. However, on the 25th September, 1956, the Chief Inspector wrote to all Chief Officers saying, "I note that a

number of Chief Officers have already fitted warning devices to their Breathing Apparatus. I understand that some Chief Officers would prefer, pending the result of the investigations of the Design and Development Committee, to rely upon their existing Brigade Orders regarding training and the use of Breathing Apparatus. In view of the varying circumstances which exist, the fitting of a warning device (e.g. a pip horn) will at present be left to the discretion of Chief Officers. The question of making such a device a requirement in the approved specification will be considered when the Design and Development Committee report the result of their further investigations."

After Willoughby's death the Chief Officer in the London Fire Brigade set up a working party on Breathing Apparatus, representative of all ranks. The Fire Brigades Union was represented by the District Secretary. They were asked to consider this question of the Chief Inspector's circular letter. The Minute of the Working Party dated 28th September, 1956, reads as follows:

"8. Breathing apparatus—Audible warning (Circulated Document B.A.6 and B.A.9) —The A.C.O. drew the attention of the Working Party to the recent decision of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council that, pending the results of the investigations of the Design and Development Committee, it would be left for Chief Fire Officers to decide whether warning devices (e.g. a pip horn) were to be fitted to Breathing Apparatus sets or not. He also pointed out that the question of making such a device a requirement in the draft specification for breathing apparatus sets would be considered when the Design and Development Committee report the results of their further investigations."

The Working Party noted this decision and agreed that the best safeguard against further accidents was to ensure that the prescribed handling and operating procedures were adhered to and that the policy for breathing apparatus men to work in pairs was strictly enforced."

This evidence was produced by the Chief Officer to the Coroner. In the result the Coroner said that he felt unable to make any recommendation with regard to the adoption of the pip horn.

## FIREWOMEN'S PAY

### *Mr. Butler Tries Again*

*The Secretaries of the Joint Council have received the following letter from the Home Office, dated 14th February, on the subject of FWMS pay. Following this, the Joint Council reaffirmed their decision of last year.*

Gentlemen,

I am directed by the Secretary of State to refer to the memorandum in which, following decisions of the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades at a meeting on 17th October, 1957, you submitted recommendation relating to the rates of pay of female members of brigades.

The Secretary of State has given careful consideration to these proposals. He agrees in principle to an increase in the pay of female members of brigades; and he is prepared at an appropriate time to accept a proposal that their pay should be related to the pay of male members of brigades. Approval now of the rates of pay recommended would, however, result in a percentage increase for firewomen not only considerably greater than that granted to firemen in June, 1957,

but also greater in certain respects than would be justified on a basis of strict comparability with the local government scale to which firewomen's pay has previously corresponded, and this increase would be reflected in the rates of pay of the higher ranks. In the circumstances the Secretary of State does not feel able, in the light of the Government's policy as regards wage increases, to agree at present to the proposed re-assessment of the basis on which the pay of female members of brigades is fixed. He would be glad, therefore, if the National Joint Council would be good enough to reconsider the amount of the increase to be granted from this point of view.

The recommendations of the Council are accordingly referred back for further consideration in the light of these views and the Secretary of State would be glad if you would arrange for a report to be made to him in due course in accordance with the provisions of Section 17(3) of the Fire Services Act (1947).

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

(signed) K. A. L. PARKER.



# The Pip Horn does work

IN his evidence at the Smithfield inquest, Mr. Delve said that he was opposed to the adoption of the Pip Horn because "it gives men a false sense of security." It was not clear on what grounds Mr. Delve holds these views, since there is no evidence from the many other Chief Officers whose Brigades use the Pip Horn that the men in any way are inclined to disregard their essential B.A. Training or to adopt any reckless attitude when engaged in B.A. work. However, it is noteworthy that the week after the Smithfield Fire our members in Middlesex were engaged in fighting a serious fire in a large furniture store. Involved in a fall of roof two of our Brothers plunged over a handrail from the first to the ground floor. Burning debris was falling all round, but they were sufficiently conscious to give signals on their Pip Horns. Thus the rescuing crews, instead of searching for them on the first floor were they were last perceived went straight to the spot on the ground floor from whence they heard these signals.

The General Secretary reported to the Executive Council that he had visited these men personally in hospital, and met the Officers concerned in the rescue and was quite satisfied that the men owed their lives to the fact that they were equipped with this simple device. A few minutes searching on the first floor might well have resulted in a fatal loss of time.

UNION-REVIEW—continued from page 13

organisation must be remedied. The contribution of the Union to the work of the broad Movement must be developed. Encouraging though the recent improvements in the Fire Brigades Union are, we must recognise the grave challenge to our Service and to our members embodied in the Government's Economic Policy. To offset the worst effect of the Government's economies upon our members we need a stronger, more active Union. The proposals briefly set out above which have been the subject of lengthy reports to Extended District Committees, are designed to produce just that result.

## SOCIALLY UNJUST

*In a circular to the movement the T.U.C. has condemned the proposed Local Government Bill.*

*Saying that it will restrict the expansion of the education service and severely damage the national interest, it calls upon the Unions through their branches and trades councils, to bring the pressure of Public Opinion to bear on Local Authorities and M.P.'s before the Bill is given its Third Reading in a few months time.*

*In the opinion of the T.U.C., the provisions of the Bill may well involve an increase in the share of the costs of the education service to be met from local rates and holds that this would be socially unjust as well as damaging to the education service.*

\* \* \*

**ALL BRANCHES PLEASE NOTE**

## New Ideas on B.A.

### A GREAT RESPONSE FROM SERVICE

HEAD Office has received an almost overwhelming response from Officers and men in the Service in reply to the invitation by the Executive Council to submit proposals designed to improve safety and comfort to the B.A. wearer, to improve B.A. Control and to suggest ways and means whereby communication might be established and maintained between B.A. crews. A number of Chief Officers wrote giving their own views and details of arrangements in force in their own Brigades. Many of the proposals were accompanied by drawings and diagrams all of which demonstrated the care and thought which has been lavished by our members upon these urgent matters. Immediate attention is being given to all the ideas submitted, but it will be some time, because of the wealth of the harvest of ideas, before the adequate report can be submitted to the Service. Meanwhile urgent attention is being given to the preparation of a fool-proof device which can be attached to the B.A. enabling a man's whereabouts to be discovered even when he is unconscious and unable to operate the device manually. The Union Committee set up to examine these proposals consists of the Convenor and Secretary, Brother Harris, Assistant General Secretary, Brothers Parry, Crisp and Barnes, Executive Council Members, Station Officer Samwell of Hastings, Sub. Officer C. J. Paine of London, Fireman

Greenfield of Barnsley, Fireman Hodge of S.E. Scotland, Chief Officer Tharby of West Ham and Chief Officer Wray, Birkenhead.

A questionnaire has been sent out to all Area Secretaries on B.A. Training following the meeting of the Home Office Committee.

\* \* \*

## PENSION RIGHTS

THE Home Secretary was recently asked in Parliament about the effect of the State Retirement Pension at the age of 65 upon the pension of a policeman retiring after 25 years' service. His answer, which is appended below, is of interest to all Firemen who joined the Service in 1948 or subsequently.

Vice-Admiral Hughes Hallett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department by how much the pension of a police officer who joined the force in 1948 and serves for 25 years will be abated when he qualifies for a National Insurance retirement pension; and upon what principle this decision was reached.

Mr. R. A. Butler: An officer who joined the police service on or after 5th July, 1948, and retires after completing twenty-five years' service will be liable to a reduction of 16s. 3d. a week in his police pension when he reaches the age of 65. He will throughout his police service have benefited by a reduction of 1s. 2d. a week in his police pension contributions in respect of this liability. These arrangements are based on the decision of successive Governments to avoid duplication of benefits under public service pension schemes and the National Insurance scheme.