

# CITY INSTALLS HIGH PRESSURE TO FIGHT FIRES

Equipment Is Patterned on  
Lines of Famous Apparatus  
Used in New York.

## 2 COMPANIES STAGE TRIAL EXHIBITION

Powerful "Guns" Enable Men  
to Throw Water on High  
Buildings.

BY HARRY FENTON.

Whenever a big fire breaks out in the down-town section, or in the wholesale district and a "double six" alarm is sent, which calls out nearly every engine and ladder company inside three-mile circle, a crowd of 10,000 persons or more, gather to watch the firemen at work. The people come on foot, in street cars and in automobiles, and unless it happens to be storming hard they usually remain until the blaze has been conquered, which sometimes may take half an hour and sometimes longer. Records show that Detroit firemen have been called to fight many big blazes in the last 20 years—often on Saturday nights when Woodward, Michigan and Monroe avenues, and other downtown thoroughfares are crowded.

A big fire, a number of years ago, broke out early one fine summer Saturday night and smoke settled all over the downtown district. Fire companies coming on the "double six" alarm with their sirens open and bells clanging, could be heard for blocks and hundreds of persons followed them. After the firemen had reached the blaze, Woodward avenue and other downtown streets were cleared and it is estimated that 20,000 or more persons were in the vicinity watching flames shoot from the windows and through the roof of a building while firemen and water towers threw tons of water into it from both the front and back. Most of the crowd that watched the fire that Saturday night remained for half an hour, while a few stayed until the firemen picked up the hose and the ladder-men put their equipment back onto the truck.

### Exhibition Is Staged.

When Chief Callahan and his men are called upon to fight Detroit's next big blaze, and if it should happen to be in the newly created high pressure district, people who gather

to watch the firemen work will remain but a short time, and they also will be disappointed, for but few automobile engines will be used.

Several years ago the board of fire commissioners started work on the new pumping station at the foot of Randolph street. It is similar to those in New York and other eastern cities. Last Sunday morning this new high pressure station, and the new companies that will work with it, went into commission.

Before going into service, an exhibition of the system was staged at Washington boulevard and Grand River avenue by high pressure company No. 1, in command of Captain Edward Burgess, and high pressure company No. 2, in command of Lieutenant Edward Reilly.

Sixteen lines of three-inch hose were attached to the high pressure hydrants along Grand River avenue and Washington boulevard and eight lines to each of the two new automobiles in the service. Both of the high pressure automobiles carry two "guns," one located in front and the other in the rear.

### Tons of Water Thrown.

All water goes through the guns, which may be placed in any position desired. Within a few seconds after word had reached the high pressure station to start the pumps water was coming through the four guns on the apparatus at a rate of 7,000 gallons a minute, the streams hitting Clifford street a block away with great force. Later the "guns" were turned into the air and it was seen that a stream could be thrown into a ten-story building as easily as if it were only one story high.

"If a fire should break out now in the high pressure district those boys would stop it in short order," remarked a retired fireman, "and they wouldn't need the help of the regular automobile fire engines, either. His words were true, for after once looking at the work of the new system one sees how quickly a building could be flooded.

Fire Commissioners Charles F. Clippert, C. Hayward Murphy, William E. Metzger and William J. Chittenden, Jr.; Chief Timothy E. Callahan, Secretary Harry Brabyn, Battalion Chiefs Michael Callahan and Alfred Smith, Edward Rumsey, superintendent of apparatus, and Chief H. M. Sternfels of the high pressure station, were present, as well as many members of the fire department and retired firemen.

### Old Timers On Hand.

One of the most interested spectators was "Mike" Staller, retired a few years ago after having served a half century in the department, most of the time with Engine Company No. 1.

"Mike," who is known to every official and fireman in the department has seen every company in the department motorized, and now he comes to the first work of the high pressure companies.

Construction started on the new pumping station a long time ago, and crews from the water department of the fire board have been busy for several years in various parts of the downtown and wholesale district installing new mains. However, all of the downtown section is not yet fully covered by this high pressure system. Each year more mains will be laid, and in a few years all of Detroit's great business and wholesale district will be covered by high pressure fire protection.

Crews from the water district have installed 26,200 feet of 12-inch pipe, 4,600 feet of 16-inch pipe, and 5,700 feet of 20-inch pipe, and a great many high pressure hydrants. Only three pumps are now in commission in the high pressure station, but three others are expected to be working by December 1. Each pump will deliver 3,500 gallons of water a minute at 250 pounds pressure, or slightly less at 300 pounds. When all six of the pumps are in running order they will be able to deliver 20,000 gallons of water a minute.

### Looked Like Niagara.

When the four "guns" were on in full force last Sunday morning the park in Washington boulevard looked like a young Niagara and then only two companies were working. There are four companies in the high pressure division, one being stationed at fire headquarters, Wayne and Larned streets; one at Engine Company No. 7, One of near Jefferson avenues; one at Engine Company No. 8, Sixth and Baker streets, and one at Engine Company No. 9, Riopelle and Larned streets.

Detroit has been fortunate in the last few years in having but few big fires in downtown or wholesale section, and, so far as the firemen are concerned, they want none of them, but if they should threaten, Chief Timothy E. Callahan and his men will be on hand to stop them in short order, as they are assured of more water than ever before, with the high pressure station shooting it out at the rate of 20,000 gallons a minute. Then they have the automobile fire engines to help out with if necessary.