

Exit The Fire Horse

Fighting Fire With Modern Machinery

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A siren scream, a roar of motors, and a fiery red streak! That's Portland's new fire department in action. Have you happened to be in the business district when the marvelous machines have been turned loose on a fire call? If you haven't, you have missed an interesting and inspiring sight.

As in practically all branches of the commercial world, the automobile has rapidly crowded out the horse because of the speed, the power, and the durability of machines. In firefighting service the automobile is rapidly crowding out not only the horse, but the steam fire engines, which have been part of the fire departments of large cities for decades past. The steam machines are rapidly taking a back seat along with the horses being shoved out into the small fire stations of the city's outskirts where fire calls are less frequent and fires less serious and where there is less need for speed, power, and durability - especially speed.

Portland can now boast of having as much automobile fire apparatus as any city in the United States, excepting New York City. Even Chicago, with its enormous department, cannot produce the equipment which can be assembled at a fire in Portland within a few minutes. Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, St. Louis, Kansas City, and all the other cities have less apparatus than Portland.

Motorizing of the Portland Fire Department was begun early last spring when strange red monsters, for various lines of work at fires, began to arrive in the city from Eastern factories. They were ordered soon after January 1 of this year. Since the first machines arrived, many marvels have appeared. And there are more novelties yet to come.

The first of the series to cause Portland to stand agape on the streets was the powerful combination chemical and hose truck, which was the first of the consignment of machines to be received from the American LaFrance factory. This machine, resembling a huge red ant, chugged its way about the streets with a deafening roar and rumble for about a week during official tests. It has a maximum



speed of 60 miles per hour, will climb the steepest hills in Portland (20% grade) at a rate of 15 miles per hour, and has enormous power for straightaway dashes.

Set into the body of the car is a huge, brass tank for chemicals and back of the seat is a patent roller for holding chemical hose. The machine, at the touch of a button, can be set in operation, can dash from the station, and proceed down the street to a fire at a rate about five times as fast as a horse-drawn hose and chemical truck.

The roar of the machinery is almost deafening as the wagon flies down the street. The gigantic force and power concentrated beneath the fiery red body shows every movement.

Soon after the arrival of this truck came three others of the same make and size, which were placed in the service in stations within the fire limits, crowding horses out to the outskirt stations. All of these machines, during official testing, attracted a great deal of attention.

Then came another marvel, an automobile pumping engine, a steam fire engine concentrated into an automobile not much larger than an ordinary hose and chemical truck. This machine was the first of the kind received in this part of the country and attracted a great deal of attention. From its sides, beneath a mass of hose and other firefighting equipment were nozzle attachments for hose, similar in construction to the feeder nozzles on a steam fire engine. These nozzles answer the same purpose on the automobile pumper as they do on the steam engine.

The powerful gasoline engine, which propels the machine also operates the huge pumping machinery. The machine has a capacity of 700 gallons of water a minute, which is the capacity also of an ordinary steamer. The advantages of the automobile pumper are numerous, but the most essential factor is speed. The machine starts instantly and dashes to a fire at a speed of 60 miles per hour. The mere turn of the throttle turns on the pumps. With the steam machines, it is necessary to drag enormous trucks by horses to the scene of the fire and to fire up the engine before any pumping can be done. This machine also can climb the steepest hill in Portland at a lively clip. It will run to the top of a hill where horses would be unable to drag a steam engine.

This innovation in the firefighting line attracted a great deal of attention. It was given its test in various parts of the city and was found to be more powerful than the largest steamers in the service.

And then came another marvel. Not many days ago there came winding its way up from the shops an enormous big, gas electric hook and ladder truck, a marvel in modern machinery. This truck is one of the largest of the kind ever manufactured and is one of the few in the United States heretofore.

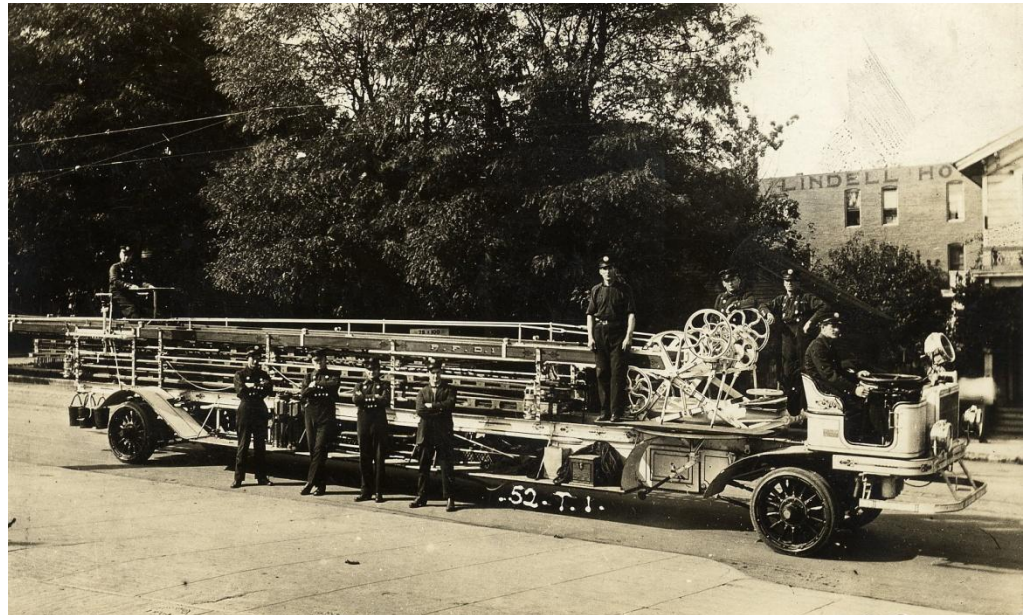
Portland has had a series of horse-drawn hook and ladder trucks, and it was often said in the fire department that this class of apparatus could never be motorized.

The truck as now in the service is 57 feet long from the front wheels to the rear, and carries an aerial ladder 85 feet in length. On the sides are all the scaling ladders, ropes, life nets, and other equipment usual on a hook and ladder truck of the horse-drawn variety. Three men are needed to operate the monster, one at the steering wheel in the front, another in charge of the siren whistle and several levers and wheels, and another on the steering wheel over the rear truck. The machinery is concentrated in

the huge, white hood of the machine, over the front trucks, and is powerful enough to whirl the truck, weighing many tons, through the streets at 35 miles per hour. It will climb moderate hills at a good speed, going to places where horses could not drag an aerial truck of the old type.

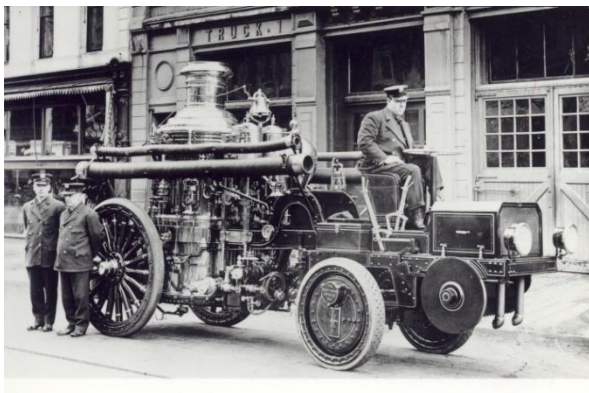
The ladder, capable of supporting several men in midair, rests down on the body of the machine in sections and can be raised by machinery to a perpendicular position 85 feet above the street in 15 seconds. Twenty five seconds after the truck arrives at the fire, the ladder can be raised to the upper stories of a building and firemen can be at the top with hose. It will stand perpendicular in the air or can be leaned over against a building, thus furnishing a valuable improvement to the life saving equipment of the department.

The truck is operated by a gasoline motor and electric motors. In the front of the front trucks is a gasoline motor, which is attached to an electric generator. When the gasoline motor is set in operation, it starts the electric generator and this transmits power to the electric motors attached to the four



wheels of the truck. The gasoline motor operates the dynamo, the dynamo feeds the motors, and the motors operate the wheels. This truck is exceedingly complex, yet thoroughly dependable. It makes a tremendous roar as it flies through the streets with its sideboards lined with firemen. It can make a run to a fire in about one fourth the time required by a horse-drawn truck of the kind. The hook and ladder machine cost the city \$12,500.

After the huge hook and ladder truck became a common sight on the streets, there suddenly appeared a



powerful front drive tractor for steam fire engines. This was received in the city only a short time ago from the Christie factory. The machine is simple in appearance, resembling somewhat of a steam roller. The front trucks of the steamer are removed and the tractor put in their place. The tractor draws the steamer about the streets at a rate of 35 miles per hour, or about four times as fast as horses can pull such a machine. The engine is 90 horse power.

In the last few months there has arrived for the Portland department in addition to the machines mentioned, eight other firefighting machines, which are now in the service in various parts of the city. In the list are chemical and hose trucks, pumping engines, and trucks of other kinds. All of which have taken the places of horse-drawn apparatus, which has been transferred from the business districts to the outer districts.

And the end is not yet. Next year there will be another strange monster on hand for the service, a 55 foot city service truck, similar to the present hook and ladder truck. It does not, however, have the aerial ladder raised by motive



power of the machine. It is a truck with front and rear wheels, two sets of steering gears, and an array of ladders for use in climbing buildings and scaling walls. This machine cost \$6,668.

Another arrival next year will be a three-tank chemical truck for service in the new station at Second and Oak Streets. This machine will have three, huge copper tanks for carrying chemicals used in firefighting. It will be much larger than the chemical trucks now in service. The three tanks will be fitted with 350 feet of on inch hose. Next year there will be received also another automobile pumper for the use of Engine #16, similar to the pumpers now in the service. It will cost \$10,000.



CHIEF DOWELL AND HIS ASSISTANT CHIEFS AT THE CITY HALL

For service on the new fireboat David Campbell, a two ton truck has been received and is in service. This machine, which is a part of the fireboat, is used in laying lines of hose from the boat to the scene of a fire. It cost \$3,000.

Not the least important of the new autos are the high speed passenger machines

purchased for use by the Chief of the Fire Department and by Battalion Chiefs. There are six of these, each having a speed of 60 miles per hour and fitted with every convenience for the comfort and safety of the Chiefs who are required to get to the scene of the fire in time to take charge of the men engaged in fighting it. The Battalion Chiefs are stationed in various parts of the city and often have to make long and dangerous runs.

It has been but a short time since the Chiefs were riding to fires in buggies drawn by one or two horses. The new method of motorized "buggies" adds greatly to the efficiency of the department, it now being able for the man in charge of firefighting to reach the scene of the fire as soon, generally, as does the apparatus from the nearest fire station.



Speed and power are the two things which have been made a specialty in Portland's new automobile firefighting service. As a result of the innovations in apparatus, it is said the expense of the department will be materially reduced and the efficiency greatly increased.

Under the present arrangement, the touch of a button will set into terrific action, a battery of firefighting machinery, which would be hard to excel. That touch will cause to thunder down the center of the city, within a few seconds time, the squad of pumpers, chemical trucks for fighting fires in their early stages, hook and ladder trucks for the rescue of persons imprisoned in buildings, a tractor dragging a steam pumper engine, and long strings of firemen with thousands of feet of hose and a thorough understanding of where and how to get best results in extinguishing fire.

Portland has spent, in the last year, a total of \$105,000 for modern automobile fire apparatus, and as a result is given credit in other cities of the country for having one of the best fire departments in the



United States. Nothing along modern lines has been overlooked and in point of speed and power, there are many things in the service which are not found elsewhere.

On top of it all, the city has spent many thousands of dollars in various parts of the city. Under the direction of Battalion Chief Holden, 11 modern stations have been erected in the last 14 months, many of which are

of such uniqueness in architecture and arrangement that they have been copied by other cities.

By the middle of next year, when all the apparatus now in sight is on hand, the city will lack nothing in apparatus for modern firefighting. In this line of protection to lives and property, the city is now far in advance of the majority of other cities and will compare favorably with, in the number of machines, New York City.

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