

52. *Mobilization and Billeting.*—When the E.F.S. was partially mobilized for night duty at the beginning of 1942 it became necessary to establish administrative office staffs. In Auckland the District Commander, Adjutant, and Quartermaster were brought on full-time duty, and at Wellington the District Commander and Adjutant. In Christchurch and Dunedin only the Adjutant was so employed. The billeting arrangements varied according to circumstances. In Auckland all the billeted personnel were supplied with sleeping-quarters only. They made their own arrangements for messing and were paid an allowance of 35s. per week to cover the messing-costs. In the other centres some of the billets were arranged on the same basis, and in others the crews were accommodated in hotels and boardinghouses. The cost of the latter accommodation ranged between 32s. 6d. and 55s. per week per man. In all cases the personnel were paid, in addition, for two hours' training duty per day at Army rates for corresponding ranks. The actual training period in most cases greatly exceeded the time paid for, the crews being engaged in exercises in fine weather throughout most week-ends. The effect of billeting on the morale of the Service was excellent not only because the extra training gave greater confidence to both officers and men, but also because the companionship of the billets welded the personnel into units with strong but friendly inter-divisional rivalry. In many cases, particularly where the individual billet had been in operation for some months, the condition of the equipment, standard of training, the improvised amenities of the station, and the general turnout would have done credit to any regular service.

53. *Stand-down.*—The direction for the final stand-down of the E.F.S. was issued in June, 1944. Early in 1943 the units in the secondary centres had been placed on a reserve basis, occasional parades being held for maintenance purposes at the discretion of the local controlling officer. The Christchurch unit continued on an active basis for brigade auxiliary duty until the stand-down, but Wellington went into reserve in May–September, 1943, and Dunedin in November, 1943 (paragraph 64). In Auckland the North Shore Division went into reserve in December, 1943, but the city divisions remained on active duty until the Fire Board took over full responsibility for the protection of the war storage areas on a subsidy basis in October, 1944. The keenness and public spirit of the men is evidenced by the fact that, even at this stage, about one hundred of them volunteered to carry on night duty as brigade auxiliaries until the regular auxiliary service could be re-established.

EMERGENCY FIRE PROTECTION OF COUNTRY TOWNS

54. The Emergency Fire Service was, on War Cabinet's instructions, concentrated in the centres considered vulnerable to enemy attack. With the southward advance of the Japanese in 1942 and the consequent possibility of invasion attack, it became necessary to give some attention to the secondary towns. In 1941 most of the volunteer brigades had formed auxiliary units to supply replacements for brigadesmen going on overseas service. These, with the regular brigades, were developed into the fire-protection section of the local Civil Defence organization. The United Fire Brigades' Associations, which had made all preliminary arrangements in 1941, accepted responsibility for the organization of this service and represented its views in discussions with the Civil Defence authorities. All surplus Army-type uniforms were made available for the auxiliary personnel, but it was impossible, owing to the priorities given to the Armed Services, to provide equipment in all cases. In 1943, when the Pacific war position had improved sufficiently to place the E.F.S. and the brigade auxiliaries on a reserve basis, the trailer pumps were distributed to the country towns, and at the same time the regular brigades were strengthened by the inclusion of the more efficient of the auxiliary personnel. This arrangement not only improved the fire-protection position in the country towns, but ensured that trained men and equipment would be available should any sudden deterioration take place in the war position. It will be seen below that it is proposed under the reorganization scheme to retain this equipment in the country towns.

PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

55. We were fortunate with respect to our fire-fighting requirements that in the early 1930's a New Zealand firm (the Colonial Motor Co., Ltd., then New Zealand distributors for the Ford Co. of Canada) had established a branch for the manufacture of fire-engines and fire-fighting equipment generally. The fire-engines were built by adapting the standard Ford V-8 chassis. The company at first experimented with a rotary pump which, while quite satisfactory in operation, was not acceptable to most of the brigades. They later standardized on two turbine pumps, one a 400 g.p.m. two-stage unit based on the English Gwynne pump. This was mounted either amidships or at the rear. The other unit is a single-stage high-speed 300 g.p.m. pump of a type used very largely in America for rural fire protection. It is front-mounted and coupled direct to the motor. In all, about 50 pumping-appliances had been manufactured by 1939.

56. Shortly before the outbreak of war an experimental trailer pump consisting of the 400 g.p.m. unit direct-coupled to a Ford V-8 engine had been produced for the Public Works Department for hydraulic operations in pile-driving. When War Cabinet accepted the recommendation that fire-fighting equipment should be provided against the possibility of air attack, it was decided to standardize, as in Britain, on the trailer pump, and an investigation was made to see whether the experimental trailer pump met the British Standard Specifications. The testing equipment prescribed by the British Standard Specification was set up, and it was found that by using a V-8 Mercury engine a power margin considerably greater than that specified in Britain could be obtained. The specification was, however, modified to provide for battery instead of magneto ignition. From a wartime operational point of view this was an advantage, since it is standard equipment on the commercial motor and testing equipment and replacement parts were available at all centres. It was also decided to dispense with brakes, both because of the extra cost and the delay in production. This decision was justified in operation, since there were only two cases of accident reported during the war years in which the absence of brakes might have been a factor.

57. The decision to standardize on this unit for emergency purposes was made firstly because of the saving in sterling funds, and secondly because our inquiries showed that there would be considerable delay in obtaining equipment from Britain, apart from the probability at that stage of the war of loss by enemy action in transit. It involved the importation of motors from Canada, but by keeping ahead with the rest of the local manufacture it would have been possible at any stage to complete the units by requisitioning the necessary motors from cars and trucks. There was also the fact to be considered that, since this type of motor was very largely used in New Zealand, ample stocks of spare parts were available in all centres. In the result, the unit has stood up to all requirements;