

## STATISTICIAN'S REPORT

By A. W. Brinson

Mr. Frank W. Bennett, President and Fellow Firemen of the North Carolina State Firemen's Association:

I herewith submit to you my report of statistics for the fifty-eighth year of our Association.

Since our Association met last with that great host and friendly city of Charlotte we have seen the peace loving people of the world crush and utterly destroy that mighty German army which Hitler had proposed should rule the world under the New Nazi order. Among those peace loving people who did this magnificent job to free Europe were many, many members of the NORTH CAROLINA STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION. You know who these men are from your own home departments.

**ABOUT CONVENTIONS:** Through May 1, more than 600 associations had been denied permission to hold meetings, while 15 meetings had been approved. Those approved included Labor Unions, Church Organizations, United Service Organizations and the Red Cross.

Up to May 1, not a single firemanic organization had received permission, all who had applied had been denied conferences by Washington—so that the chance of our Association holding this year's meeting is controlled entirely by the War Committee on Conventions at Washington.

**FIRE PREVENTION WEEK CONTEST:** The National Fire Prevention Association's committee on fire prevention and clean-up campaign announced the awards to cities for excellence in the 1944 National Fire Prevention week.

A total of 2121 reports were received from towns and cities in the United States, Canada, Alaska, and Hawaii, of which 498 are from Canada and 1623 from the United States. This is a large increase over any previous year.

Winning cities in each state are:

Alabama	Tuscaloosa	Iowa	Burlington
Arizona	Prescott	Kansas	Wichita
Arkansas	El Dorado	Kentucky	Louisville
California	Los Angeles	Louisiana	New Orleans
Colorado	Fort Collins	Maine	Portland
Connecticut	New Haven	Maryland	Baltimore
Florida	Fort Lauderdale	Massachusetts	Boston
Georgia	Atlanta	Michigan	Grand Rapids
Idaho	Nanysa	Minnesota	Minneapolis
Illinois	Chicago	Mississippi	Hattiesburg
Indiana	Gary	Missouri	St. Louis

Montana	Billings	South Carolina	Columbia
Nebraska	Beatrice	South Dakota	Aberdeen
Nevada	Reno	Tennessee	Memphis
New Hampshire	Concord	Texas	Corpus Christi
New Jersey	Jersey City		and El Paso
New Mexico	Carlsbad	Utah	Salt Lake City
New York	New York	Virginia	Roanoke
North Carolina	Wilson	Washington	Spokane
North Dakota	Valley City	West Virginia	Parkersburg
Ohio	Lakewood	Wisconsin	Stevens Point
Oregon	Portland	Wyoming	Heart Mountain
Pennsylvania	York	Alaska	Ketchikan
Rhode Island	Providence	Hawaii	Hilo

**FIREMEN TRANSFER PATIENTS:** Fire Chief W. Hendrix Palmer and members of the Charlotte, North Carolina, Fire Department assisted the Charlotte Variety Club on March 5, 1944, in the greatest mass transfer of polio patients in history—the movement of caravan of 88 polio patients from the emergency polio hospital at Hickory, North Carolina, a distance of 75 miles to the permanent polio clinic of the Memorial Hospital in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The caravan consisted of fifteen ambulances, seventy-four automobiles and a number of trucks. Escorting the caravan, which traveled at 30 miles an hour, were members of the Charlotte Fire Department, the State Highway Patrol and Charlotte and Hickory policemen.

At Hickory, North Carolina, Chief Palmer carried the first little polio patient to the caravan and placed her aboard an ambulance. The Chief led the procession. The caravan idea of mass transfer was sponsored by the Charlotte Variety Club, motion picture and showmen's organization, assisted by Fire Chief Palmer and Chief Walter Anderson of the Charlotte Police and Chief Henry C. Severs, of the Mecklenburg County Police.

**IMPORTANT FIRES FROM SEPTEMBER 7, 1944 TO JUNE 7, 1945:** I have grouped 354 typical fires reported to the N. F. P. A. during a nine months period from September 7, 1944 to June 7, 1945. In this group have been included fires destroying vital war supplies, delaying production in defense plants, or damaging finished products. Also other important fires not immediately related to military operations but having an indirect effect upon the war program.

These fires only represent a small fraction of the total number in the United States and Canada in the same period. In this group are included fires in military properties only where such fires have been reported through civilian channels. Other fires in military properties where all information about the circumstances of the fire has been restricted, are not included in this group survey.

These statistics taken from preliminary reports to the N. F. P. A. office

are not complete and are subject to correction when further information is available.

This group of 354 typical fires represents a loss of \$141,674,500, and are listed below:

There were 18 food canning and packing plants with an estimated loss of \$42,454,853; 21 lumber plants and building supplies \$4,517,745; eight oil wells and refineries \$1,527,000; four miscellaneous fires \$423,000; 23 group business fires \$6,330,250; 42 storage warehouses and ordnance depots \$7,474,300; six department stores \$2,290,000; six alcohol plants \$689,050; 15 buildings of various kinds \$2,852,000; one bowling alley \$500,000; four foundries \$1,316,000; two race tracks \$700,000; 73 factories \$15,897,902; five cleaning plants \$630,000; seven hospitals \$485,000; four coal tipples \$630,000; 17 grain elevators and feed mills \$4,039,000; six feed oil mills \$1,488,500; three dairies \$625,000; 19 munition plants \$4,688,000; 10 oil storage tankers, etc., \$540,500; eight airplane hangars, equipment, etc., \$3,988,000; 23 shipyards, ships, piers, truck and rail terminals \$9,796,450; 23 camps and training stations \$1,445,000; one public school \$80,000; one power station \$75,000.

The city of Lansing, Michigan, reported a series of incendiary fires all taking place within 22 minutes with a loss of \$192,000. On October 20, 1944, disaster struck and devastated part of the industrial zone of Cleveland, Ohio, causing great loss of life and \$6,000,000 damage to property. Two containers of liquified natural gas exploded and threw sheets of flame over nearby residential areas thereby bringing death to not less than 130 people.

STATE FIRE LOSS: From the best information obtainable, including the known amount paid in 1944 by insurance companies doing business in the state, I estimate that the gross fire loss in North Carolina was \$8,443,100. This gives us an increase of only \$747,100 over 1943 loss raising our per capita tax to \$2.02 which is small increase of 7 cents, accounted for in 18 major fires reported by North Carolina fire chiefs during the year 1944.

Fires in North Carolina with over \$25,000 loss for 1944 reported to the Insurance Commissioner's office by the fire chiefs are:

Wilmington, January 2, St. Lukes Zion Church .....	\$ 27,000
Elizabeth City, January 21, business .....	115,000
Winston-Salem, February 20, Forsythe Recreation Center .....	46,600
Charlotte, February 22, Swift & Co., warehouse .....	72,250
Charlotte, March 3, Witt Tire Company .....	27,158
Statesville, March 30, North State Box Company .....	27,000
Pasquotank County, April 8, Forman-Derrickson Lumber Co. ....	450,000
Rocky Mount, July 3, 4 cars rolled canvas, U. S. government ....	68,000

Greensboro, July 7, Morton Chemical Company .....	38,250
Durham, July 8, Big 4 Warehouse and surrounding property ....	278,214
Charlotte, July 10, Rayless Department Store .....	66,659
Charlotte, July 23, Piedmont Feed Mills .....	50,000
Gastonia, August 21, Matthews Belt Company .....	59,000
High Point, September 12, Broyhill Warehouse .....	31,000
Greensboro, November 9, Graves Dairy Specialty Company .....	35,165
Kannapolis, November 4, Kannapolis Bakery and adjoining property	52,500
Forest City, December 2, Rose's 5 & 10c Store and adjoining property	65,000
Mebane December 10, Mebane Theater .....	27,000

Another fire bordering on major proportions was the one at Bethel in the business district caused by the collision of an automobile and gasoline tanker resulting in a fire with a loss of \$18,600. The largest fire in the state was out of incorporated cities, this being the Forman-Derrickson Lumber Company in Pasquotank county, loss estimated at \$450,000.

The Durham fire in 1944 at one time threatened to reach further conflagration proportions. The Durham Fire Department working valiantly was ably assisted by a large number of military personnel, army and navy, on this Saturday night. Camp Butner firemen and others from surrounding towns assisted with this large conflagration.

The Durham Chamber of Commerce gave a barbecue dinner in appreciation to the Durham Fire Department and their invited guests.

PERSONNEL AND FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT: Following is a summary of increases or decreases in the Fire Fighting Equipment in various cities and towns of North Carolina as reported to the Insurance Commissioner as of October 1, 1944.

I find that in spite of the armed services taking so many of our firemen the various departments have received into the fire fighting field on the home front enough men to show a total of 4,337 firemen in the state of North Carolina. This represents an increase of 54 men. While the paid departments have been hard hit yet they have been able to replace their heavy losses so well that from a total of 886 in 1943 they only have a small loss of nine men. This shows that the chiefs of these various departments have been able to maintain their normal personnel. The volunteer firemen have increased by 63 over 1943 representing 3460 men. It can be well said that when it comes to the protection of our loved ones and our homes and property on the home front you can most surely count on 4,337 loyal firemen of the North Carolina State Firemen's Association.

In view of the fact that equipment has been hard to obtain because of war conditions, the state as a whole has shown material gains. There was an increase of one aerial truck, three ladder trucks, three reels and

14 combination pumpers. There was a decrease of seven hose trucks which were, in most cases, replaced with combination pumpers. By this increase of pumpers the pumping capacity has been raised 7300 gallons per minute. This gives a total state-wide pumping capacity of 201,100 gallons per minute. There has been a considerable amount of new hose purchased during the year to replace much that had to be discarded. The reports in the Insurance Commissioner's office show that there was on hand new and good condition 649,550 feet of hose. There are many cities and towns that have also purchased a considerable amount of 1½ inch hose. In comparing this year's reports against last year's there was an increase of 32,580 feet of hose.

In compiling the estimated value of the state-wide equipment I find that on October 1, 1943 there was \$3,867,309 worth and on October, 1944 \$3,946,194 total value. This shows a net gain of \$78,885. From these figures I find the per capita investment to be \$3.44.

**FIRE TOOLS:** The Bureau of Vital Statistics recorded 71 deaths in North Carolina in 1944 caused by conflagrations of buildings, this number of lives represents a decrease of six less deaths than in 1943. Accidental deaths from outdoor fires, playing with matches, smoking in bed, scalding, and handling of oil and other inflammable fuels, etc., was 144 men, women, and children. This was a decrease in deaths of 16 over 1943.

**AIRPLANE DEATHS:** There were 254 deaths from airplane accidents and crashes. This shows an increase of 16 deaths over 1943. I could not ascertain how many of these deaths were caused from burning planes.

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:** The North Carolina State Fire Association, cooperative sponsor of the Fire College and Drill School, was unable to obtain a permit from Washington to conduct the 1945 session of the oldest state-wide sponsored fire personnel training program. The members of the North Carolina State Firemen's Association have taken full advantage of such educational programs available and through their agencies have in no manner violated the restricted mandate of our nation at war. They have conducted the local and regional educational programs in which the conductor of the North Carolina Fire College and Drill School, the working officers of the Association and the Insurance Commissioner have participated.

Included in last year's meetings of the Eastern Carolina Fire Association were Le Grange, Mount Olive and Morehead City; Roanoke River Association, Scotland Neck, Roanoke Rapids, Rich Square and Whitakers; the Sand Hills Association and several local meetings not included in the regional groups. The Sand Hills Association will conduct their regional school at Hamlet during the month of September and will

be followed by a regional school at Greenville by the Eastern Carolina Association.

The present war conditions including the deployment of military personnel across the nation and re-assignment of returned soldiers north and south and with the high probability of the returning of many thousands before the end of 1945 precludes, in the opinion of the conductor of the North Carolina Fire College and Drill School, any possibility of modification of travel restrictions and assembling of large groups just as a wartime measure precludes the possibility of having the Fire College and Drill School during 1945.

The observation of the conductor states that there is a fine interest among the fire departments throughout the state for the 1946 Fire College and Drill School. Back of it other facilities have been maintained intact and will be ready when wartime restrictions are lifted.

**SCHOOL FIRES:** School fires reported from protected cities and towns only are listed below:

January 2, 1944, Wilmington, Sunday School Building St. Luke's A. M. E. Zion Church \$4,000 risk, loss \$300, caused from exposure of church fire.

February 28, 1944, Morganton, Avery Avenue Grammar School involving \$25,000 risk, loss \$750, report shows indications of incendiary origin.

May 3, 1944, Kannapolis, J. W. Canon High School involving \$100,000 risk, loss \$25, cause children playing with matches.

May 7, 1944, Winston-Salem, Kimberly Negro School involving \$152,000 risk, total loss contents \$525, probable cause accidental.

November 6, 1944, Greensboro, Gillispie Park School involving \$25,000 risk, loss \$20,000, apparent cause defective flue.

November 16, 1944, Greensboro, Spring Street Central Junior High School involving \$90,000 risk, loss \$165.

There were several rural school fires in the various counties during the year which were in unprotected areas and unreported. These six school fires had a total risk of \$396,000 with a total small fire loss of \$21,765. This represents one of the smallest losses in the state schools in many years.

I am unable to give any figures on the national death and fire loss in the United States as this information has not been released.

In concluding my report I wish to pay tribute to Sherwood Brock



well for his 31 years of service to the State of North Carolina and the firemen as State Fire Marshal. I wish also to express my sincere appreciation to my friend Sherwood Brockwell and the Insurance Commissioner's office for their 100 per cent cooperation in making available the many records from which I have compiled my report.

Respectfully submitted,

ALBERT W. BRINSON, Statistician