



SCOTTISH HOME DEPARTMENT

Report of
His Majesty's Inspector
of Fire Services
for Scotland

For 1950

*Presented by the Secretary of State for Scotland to Parliament
by Command of His Majesty*

EDINBURGH

HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE: 1951

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Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Fire Services for Scotland for 1950

SCOTTISH HOME DEPARTMENT,
ST ANDREW'S HOUSE,
EDINBURGH, 1

March, 1951.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HECTOR MCNEIL, M.P.,
His Majesty's Secretary of State for Scotland.

SIR,

1. I have the honour to submit my annual report on the fire services in Scotland.

Establishments of Fire Brigades

2. Recruitment of whole-time men improved during the year, so that at the end of the period (as is shown by Table 1 at the end of this Report) the whole-time operational strength for Scotland was only 30 below the authorised establishment, as against 94 at the end of 1949. This takes account of 53 men serving in temporary engagements who will ultimately need to be replaced.

3. Firemasters continue to recruit with care, with the result that out of 802 applicants only 173 have been accepted into the service. These men are well up to the required standard and should prove useful members of the service.

4. The service is still having difficulty in keeping its recruits. 84 men resigned voluntarily during the year (see Table 2), and 23 of these had been in the service for less than one year.

5. The total deficiency in the authorised establishments of part-time men is practically identical with that of last year—recruitment having done little more than cover wastages. It is regrettable that the fire service is not proving more attractive to those able to give part-time assistance.

Health

6. The health of members of the fire service remained fairly good throughout the year, although influenza caused more than the normal number of absences from duty in some brigades. The operational establishments are such that any considerable absence from duty has a serious effect on the working of brigades, and when influenza was at its height there was difficulty in adequately manning some fire appliances.

7. During the year there were 741 cases of sickness or injury attributable to service, and 190 of those affected were absent from duty for one or more days, entailing a loss to the service of 3,817 duty days. Absences not attributable to service brought about a further loss of 16,477 duty days, making a total loss from both causes of 20,294 duty days.

Training

8. The pattern of the training arrangements remained unaltered. Training at stations was often handicapped by the volume of maintenance and adaptation work still being undertaken by firemen, and also by the inadequate training facilities at the majority of stations. Nevertheless, in the main, satisfactory progress is being made in training in all branches of fire brigade work.

9. The central training of recruits and junior ranks was continued at the Scottish Fire Service Training School which is still located at "Moredun," Paisley. The details of courses held during the year are as follows:—

Course	Length of Course	Number of Courses	Number who Attended.
Recruits	8 weeks	3	117
Instructors	3 weeks	1	36
Fire Prevention	8 weeks	1	35
Firemen's Refresher	3 weeks	1	38
Section Leaders' Refresher	4 weeks	1	27

10. Breathing apparatus training was given attention during the year. Preliminary courses for instructors were held, through the courtesy of the Scottish Division of the National Coal Board, at the Mines Rescue Station at Coatbridge, and the fire service is very appreciative of the facilities afforded there.

11. The facilities for training officers provided at the Fire Service College, Brighton, continue to be used, and during 1950 students from most of the Scottish Brigades attended courses at the College.

12. It is very much to be regretted that in some brigades shortages of whole-time men prevented full advantage being taken of places available at courses at the central training establishments.

Appliances and Equipment

13. Replacements of obsolescent appliances and equipment are still being substantially delayed by supply difficulties, although there was a slight easing in the position during the year. In addition to some ancillary vehicles, such as utility vans and staff cars, eight new major fire appliances have come into commission. Two vehicles have been adapted as fire appliances either wholly or partly in brigade workshops, and one has been converted in the Home Office Fire Service Department's workshops. While these replacements or additions represent an improvement, the replacement rate will need to be increased considerably if there is to be any material alleviation of the present state of the fleets of appliances, which, as I reported last year, is far from satisfactory.

14. Of the eleven appliances new to brigade fleets is it pleasing to know that seven are escape-carrying appliances. Not all of these have been purchased with wheeled escapes, but where new escapes have been provided there has been an improvement in life-saving resources, which will help to make good a deficiency that has been causing me concern.

Premises

15. The provision of satisfactory accommodation continues to be the outstanding problem in the fire service. Some slight relief has been attained during the year by adaptations to existing fire service premises, and by the conversion of one or two old buildings which have fallen into the hands of the fire service when sites have been purchased for the future erection of fire stations. The position, however, is substantially the same as last year. Not only in fire stations, but also in headquarters premises, stores and workshops, work is often being done under very great difficulties.

16. Restrictions on capital investment, imposed in the national interest, continued to stand in the way of a large-scale building programme for the fire service. Up to the end of the year permission had been given in principle for the erection of a total of 13 new fire stations throughout Scotland. Constructional work had not, however, started on any of them.

17. A few fire brigade authorities were authorised during the year to build a limited number of houses for firemen. As houses become available for firemen and their families there should be less likelihood of losing men from the service.

Communications

18. During the year one further very high frequency wireless system was installed. Five fire brigades are now provided with wireless, although in three cases only part of the brigade area is covered by the scheme.

Water Supplies

19. Some progress was made during the period under review in improving the availability of water for fire-fighting. The normal installation of new hydrants to keep pace with building, and the replacement of defective hydrants by standard types, were undertaken.

20. One serious problem remains, however. I consider the standardisation of hydrants to be a matter of major importance, and I would urge, therefore, that more rapid progress in this direction should be made.

Mutual Assistance and Fire Brigade Area Boundary Arrangements

21. Agreements on mutual assistance between brigades have not been formalised in all cases, but arrangements made to provide adequate fire cover close to brigade area boundaries are working well. During the year 259 fires were attended by appliances from supporting brigades, either as part or whole of the first attendance, and at 8 fires reinforcing appliances attended from supporting brigades. In no case was payment required for this assistance. I commend very highly the co-operation which exists between brigades in these matters.

Fire Prevention

22. The increasing recognition of the need to reduce losses by fire, and the growing appreciation of the fire prevention work of brigades, have led to a steady rise in the number of requests for advice on fire precautions and in the number of inspections carried out (see Table 4). Requests covered a wide range of premises and, in addition to those referring to existing buildings, an increasing number related to the planning of new buildings and of extensive alterations. This is a welcome development, since it is at the planning stage that fire prevention requirements are most easily incorporated.

23. A realisation of the value of fire prevention arrangements, particularly in reducing the danger to life, was evident from the number of instances in which managements of schools, institutions, hospitals, and business and industrial firms, not bound by statutory obligations, applied for and adopted fire prevention advice from the brigades.

24. Fire prevention advice is being disseminated by brigades as widely as possible, some brigades having issued to farmers and occupiers of country properties pamphlets on safeguards against fire. The training in fire drill of staffs at hospitals, schools and institutions has been undertaken by brigades where necessary. Lectures to public bodies and youth organisations have also been arranged.

25. Perhaps the greatest problem facing brigades in undertaking fire prevention work arises from the limited staffs of qualified officers at their disposal.

Certain fire authorities have increased, or are taking steps towards increasing, their fire prevention establishments. It is a reasonable assumption that further increases will be found to be necessary if fire prevention is to develop as it should.

26. With a view to preparing members of brigades for this specialised work, an introductory course of two months duration was held during the year at the Scottish Fire Service Training School. All brigades were represented, and a total of 35 students attended the course. Where possible these students have since been attached to the fire prevention departments of their brigades to gain experience prior to attending, as opportunity offers, long courses at the Fire Service College where they may obtain full fire prevention qualifications.

Fires, and other Occurrences

27. Table 3 summarises the number of incidents attended by the brigades in 1950. Some very serious fires occurred during the year. It says much for the fire brigades concerned that they were speedily brought under control and did not involve adjacent property to any great extent.

Part-time firemen are continuing to show considerable ability and enthusiasm in fighting country fires, several of which during the year have proved troublesome and difficult to handle.

28. Deaths due to fire during 1950 totalled 37. Of these 30 occurred before the arrival of the brigade or as a result of injuries received before the arrival of the brigade. During the same period 56 persons were rescued by fire brigades, 37 at fires and 19 at other occurrences.

29. Shortages of staff, and the prior obligation of providing adequate fire cover, are making it increasingly difficult for fire brigades to undertake special service work, such as pumping away flood water and rescuing animals, and the number of such services undertaken shows a decrease of 15 per cent. from the previous year.

Civil Defence

30. Recruiting to the Auxiliary Fire Service has been generally very slow and in some districts it was impracticable to commence basic training because of the small numbers enrolled. At the end of the year there were 426 recruits to the Service, of which number 256 were under training.

31. During the latter part of the year a co-ordinated campaign of locally and centrally organised publicity was undertaken, incorporating features designed to attract recruits to the Auxiliary Fire Service.

32. In some brigades the training of whole-time operational firemen in Civil Defence subjects was begun, after instructors from the brigades had attended courses at the Civil Defence training schools.

33. During the year several senior fire service officers attended courses at the Civil Defence Staff College, which proved to be of considerable interest and value to them.

Inspections of Fire Brigades

34. All fire brigades were inspected during the year. Inspections were on the same pattern as last year, but it was possible to visit a greater number of stations.

35. Notwithstanding the difficulties imposed by inadequate premises, by restrictions on expenditure, and by some shortages of manpower, progress is being made in all brigades and in general they are efficiently discharging their responsibilities.

Appreciation

36. Together with the Assistant Inspector I have received at all times the greatest consideration from members of fire brigade authorities, and from Firemasters, officers and men and women of fire brigades, and accordingly I should like to record my appreciation.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A. D. WILSON,

H. M. Inspector of Fire Services for Scotland.

ESTABLISHMENT AND STRENGTH

31st December,

TABLE 1

BRIGADE	MEN : OPERATIONAL																			
	Whole-time											Retained					Volunteer			
	Authorised Establishment											Authorised Establishment					Actual Strength	Actual Strength		
	Firemasters	Assistant Firemasters	Deputy Firemasters*	Divisional Officers	Column Officers	Senior Company Officers	Company Officers	Section Leaders	Leading Firemen	Firemen	Total	Actual Strength	Company Officers	Section Leaders	Leading Firemen	Firemen			Total	Actual Strength
Angus	1	—	D.O.	1	1	—	6	10	9	78	106	106	—	5	12	108	125	103	—	1
Central	1	—	D.O.	1	—	1	7	9	13	75	107	103	—	3	21	181	205	156	24	24
Fife	1	—	D.O.	1	—	—	6	7	10	47	72	72	—	2	21	157	180	134	—	—
Glasgow	1	1	—	2	4	3	26	41	56	444	578	568	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lanarkshire ...	1	—	D.O.	1	1	1	8	13	19	114	158	158	—	—	12	108	120	102	106	24
North Eastern ...	1	—	D.O.	1	1	—	5	10	8	73	99	99	—	11	44	385	440	372	35	32
Northern	1	—	S.C.O.	—	—	1	2	3	2	16	25	26	—	6	24	133	163	152	192	172
Perth and Kinross	1	—	S.C.O.	—	—	1	2	3	4	24	35	34	—	2	17	143	162	138	—	10
South Eastern ...	1	1	—	—	2	1	16	25	26	212	284	284	1	6	33	274	314	255	—	—
South Western ...	1	—	D.O.	1	1	1	5	9	12	80	110	102	1	4	44	373	422	344	50	29
Western	1	—	D.O.	1	2	—	10	18	16	130	178	170	2	7	25	210	244	202	161	157
Totals	11	2	—	9	12	9	93	148	175	1293	1752	1722	4	46	253	2072	2375	1958	568	449

* This column shows the rank of Deputy Firemasters (where not otherwise shown).
 D.O.—Divisional Officer.
 S.C.O.—Senior Company Officer.

1722
 69
 71
 1562

1958
 449
 241

8

OF FIRE BRIGADES

1950

CONTROL AND WATCHROOM STAFF														ADMINISTRATIVE—UNIFORMED OR CIVILIANS (Not included elsewhere in this Table)										Gross Total	Gross Total			
Men							Women							Authorised Establishment												Actual Strength	Authorised Establishment	Actual Establishment
Authorised Establishment					Actual Strength		Authorised Establishment					Actual Strength		Office and Stores		Work-shops		Other Employees		Total								
Company Officers	Senior Leaders	Leading Firemen	Firemen or Watch-room Attendants	Total	Actual Strength	Senior Leading Firewomen	Leading Firewomen	Firewomen	Total	Actual Strength	Total Authorised Establishment	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women			Men	Women	
—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	6	8	8	8	2	3	8†	—	—	4	10	7	10	7	256	235					
—	—	—	7	7	6	—	—	3	3	3	10	1	4	2‡	—	—	—	3	4	3	4	353	299					
—	—	—	—	—	6†	—	—	8	8	1	8	2	3	1‡	—	—	2	3	5	2	4	268	219					
—	—	—	39	39	32	—	—	17†	17†	17†	56	5	10	9†	—	7	2	21	12	21	12	667	650					
—	—	—	3	3	3	1	—	7	8	8	11	4	5	1‡	—	—	4	5	9	5	9	409	309					
—	—	—	3	3	3	—	1	7	8	8	11	2	5	2‡	—	—	4	5	4	5	594	523						
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	2	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	—	384	354					
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	1‡	—	—	1	3	1	2	201	185						
—	1	—	9	10	9	—	4	4	8	8	18	2	9	9	—	3	1	14	10	14	9	640	579					
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	4	4	4	3	4	2‡	—	—	5	4	5	4	595	488						
—	—	—	7	7	6	—	3	6	9	10	16	1	7	6‡	—	—	7	7	14	6	14	620	565					
—	1	—	68	69	65	3	9	63	75	69	144	22	55	41	—	10	20	73	75	71	72	4987	4406					

† Non-uniformed.

‡ All uniformed members of the Fire Brigade.

§ Includes 1 uniformed member of the Fire Brigade as Transport Officer.

SUMMARY OF FIRES AND SPECIAL SERVICES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED DURING THE YEAR
ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1950

TABLE 3

Fire Area	Fires requiring the attendance of							Total Fires	Chimney Fires	False Alarms			Total Fire Calls	Special Services
	1 Pump	2 Pumps	3-4 Pumps	5 Pumps	6-8 Pumps	9-10 Pumps	Malicious			With good intent	Total			
Angus	721	5	2	1	—	—	—	729	622	41	110	151	1502	159
Central	458	1	3	—	3	—	—	465	286	17	74	91	842	41
Fife	303	16	6	—	—	—	—	325	377	7	29	36	738	33
Glasgow	1923	—	3	12	2	—	—	1940	2222	459	1059	1518	5680	48
Lanarkshire	714	36	10	2	2	—	—	764	474	27	70	97	1335	75
North Eastern	489	7	—	—	—	—	—	496	286	10	64	74	856	62
Northern	159	17	10	—	1	—	—	187	98	4	21	25	310	17
Perth and Kinross	226	14	1	2	—	—	—	243	200	4	22	26	469	—
South Eastern	1173	11	2	—	2	—	—	1188	1395	62	319	381	2964	71
South Western	464	3	1	—	1	—	—	469	377	10	59	69	915	48
Western	618	13	1	—	—	—	—	632	536	40	133	173	1341	48
Totals	7248	123	39	17	11	—	—	7438	6873	681	1960	2641	16952	602

**FIRE PREVENTION INSPECTIONS
DURING THE YEAR ENDED**

TABLE 4

(I) FIRE AREA	(II) Industrial or Business Premises or Undertakings					(III) Local Authority Premises or Undertakings other than headings (IV) and (V)					(IV) Schools				
	Full Survey	Specific Inspection	Routine Inspection	Follow-up Inspection	Total	Full Survey	Specific Inspection	Routine Inspection	Follow-up Inspection	Total	Full Survey	Specific Inspection	Routine Inspection	Follow-up Inspection	Total
Angus	32	89	23	10	154	2	5	—	1	8	9	11	1	—	21
Central	36	55	31	4	126	3	4	3	—	10	59	16	2	2	79
Fife	8	71	10	6	95	4	2	2	—	8	16	9	4	1	30
Glasgow	52	224	—	—	276	12	212	—	—	224	33	6	—	—	39
Lanarkshire	18	25	—	—	43	2	3	—	—	5	5	19	—	—	24
North Eastern	9	69	14	21	113	—	8	—	3	11	24	24	18	6	72
Northern	2	6	—	—	8	3	1	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—
Perth and Kinross	1	5	—	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	18	7	—	—	25
South Eastern	36	25	—	—	61	45	10	—	—	55	22	160	—	—	182
South Western	7	53	—	7	67	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	2	5
Western	7	213	—	50	270	—	4	—	—	4	2	6	436	—	444
Totals	208	835	78	98	1219	71	249	5	4	329	190	259	461	11	921

Note.—For the purposes of this table the terms “Survey,” “Specific Inspection,” “Routine Inspection,” and “Follow-up Inspection” are used as follows:—

Survey. A thorough and comprehensive examination of the premises and processes at risk, as regards fire prevention arrangements which are in operation or require to be made, covering, for instance, fire appliances and equipment, water supplies, means of escape, storage conditions, and “good-housekeeping.”

UNDERTAKEN BY FIRE BRIGADES

31st DECEMBER, 1950

(V) Hospitals, Homes, &c.					(VI) Cinemas, Theatres, and other places of Public Entertainment or Assembly.					(VII) Miscellaneous Premises or Undertakings not included elsewhere in this Table					(VIII) Gross Totals				
Full Survey	Specific Inspection	Routine Inspection	Follow-up Inspection	Total	Full Survey	Specific Inspection	Routine Inspection	Follow-up Inspection	Total	Full Survey	Specific Inspection	Routine Inspection	Follow-up Inspection	Total	Full Survey	Specific Inspection	Routine Inspection	Follow-up Inspection	Total
8	31	—	5	44	83	18	100	22	223	70	98	11	15	194	204	252	135	53	644
14	11	28	6	59	13	17	462	28	520	12	6	12	1	31	137	109	538	41	825
10	7	8	5	30	4	18	30	13	65	2	15	2	—	19	44	122	56	25	247
3	—	—	—	13	—	3	472	—	475	1	23	36	—	60	101	478	508	—	1087
8	—	—	—	33	186	191	—	620	997	6	16	—	—	22	225	279	—	620	1124
18	21	69	34	142	5	43	402	17	467	3	10	1	1	15	59	175	504	82	820
5	4	—	—	9	11	2	4	—	17	16	2	—	—	18	37	15	4	—	56
3	5	1	—	9	6	2	21	—	29	4	7	—	—	11	32	26	22	—	80
39	25	—	34	98	153	675	2111	—	2939	17	8	—	—	25	312	903	2111	34	3360
15	18	—	10	43	35	23	458	7	523	3	16	—	1	20	62	111	458	27	658
17	32	—	17	66	14	55	916	—	985	4	12	8	—	24	44	322	1360	67	1793
140	189	106	111	546	510	1047	4976	707	7240	138	213	70	18	439	1257	2792	5696	949	10694

Specific Inspection. An examination of the premises and plant for the purposes indicated above, but limited to one or more particular aspect of fire prevention.

Routine Inspection. An examination made, as a rule, periodically, for the purpose of ascertaining whether particular precautions which should be in operation are in fact being maintained.

Follow-up Inspection. An inspection made following a survey or specific inspection to note progress or to advise on detail.

TABLE 5

STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE AND INCOME FOR THE LOCAL FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED MAY, 1950

FIRE BRIGADE AUTHORITY	EXPENDITURE										INCOME			BALANCE	
	Total Expenditure approved for Fire Services Grant (1)	Pay and Allow- ances	Uniforms and Personal Equipment	Pensions and Gra- duation tuities	Appli- ances and Vehicles	Water Supplies	Pre- mises	Com- muni- cations	Loan Charges	Other Expen- diture	set against Expen- diture (2)	Met from Fire Services Grant	Met from Rates & other Sources (3)		
Angus ...	£ 65,913	£ 47,223	£ 1,613	£ 2,218	£ 4,921	£ 1,149	£ 3,274	£ 1,139	£ 283	£ 4,093	£ 15,570	£ 12,586	£ 37,757		
Central ...	80,055	47,930	2,250	2,509	13,141	3,913	4,241	1,787	309	3,975	16,080	15,994	47,981		
Fife ...	47,064	31,803	1,769	500	3,446	4,315	2,644	1,068	—	1,519	9,081	9,496	28,487		
Glasgow ...	343,154	229,034	13,936	29,432	16,442	8,397	31,170	6,006	7,376	1,361	71,007	68,037	204,110		
Lanarkshire ...	94,510	61,270	2,920	766	12,212	7,601	3,801	1,373	—	4,567	18,033	19,119	57,358		
North Eastern ...	78,187	52,457	1,839	2,520	8,866	2,596	3,264	3,049	1,830	1,766	13,880	16,077	48,230		
Northern ...	20,102	14,268	424	53	1,919	555	1,417	1,025	62	379	2,944	4,290	12,868		
Perth and Kinross	35,330	17,955	1,394	929	6,983	3,620	2,182	992	367	908	4,300	7,758	23,272		
South Eastern ...	170,067	116,870	4,651	11,462	10,680	6,971	6,300	3,447	633	9,053	42,187	31,970	95,910		
South Western ...	77,393	50,241	1,552	808	9,200	2,464	7,529	3,252	466	1,881	10,434	16,739	50,220		
Western ...	104,861	75,113	2,601	2,306	6,067	5,725	6,499	2,197	535	3,818	16,183	22,170	66,508		
Total ...	1,116,636	744,164	34,949	53,503	93,877	47,306	72,321	25,335	11,861	33,320	219,699	224,236	672,701		

NOTES—(1) Expenditure incurred by the Secretary of State in connection with Training Centres for the period 1st April 1949 to 31st March 1950, amounted to £16,585. Of this amount the sum of £11 261 was recovered from Fire Brigade Authorities by deduction from grant payable.

(2) Income includes transfer values amounting to £155,828, paid to Fire Brigade Authorities by the Secretary of State under Article 41 of the Firemen's Pension Scheme.

(3) In the case of certain of the constituent fire authorities the expenditure qualifies for Exchequer Equalisation Grant under the Local Govern-ment Act, 1948 (Part II.).

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