

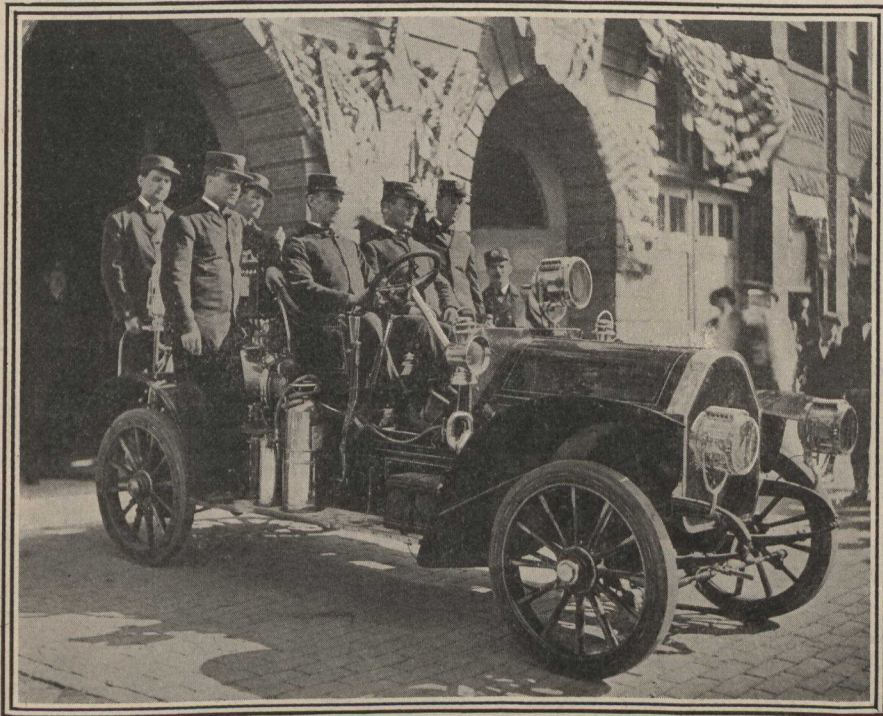
THE LATEST TYPES OF FIRE-FIGHTING APPARATUS

Canadian Cities have not yet adopted these but—

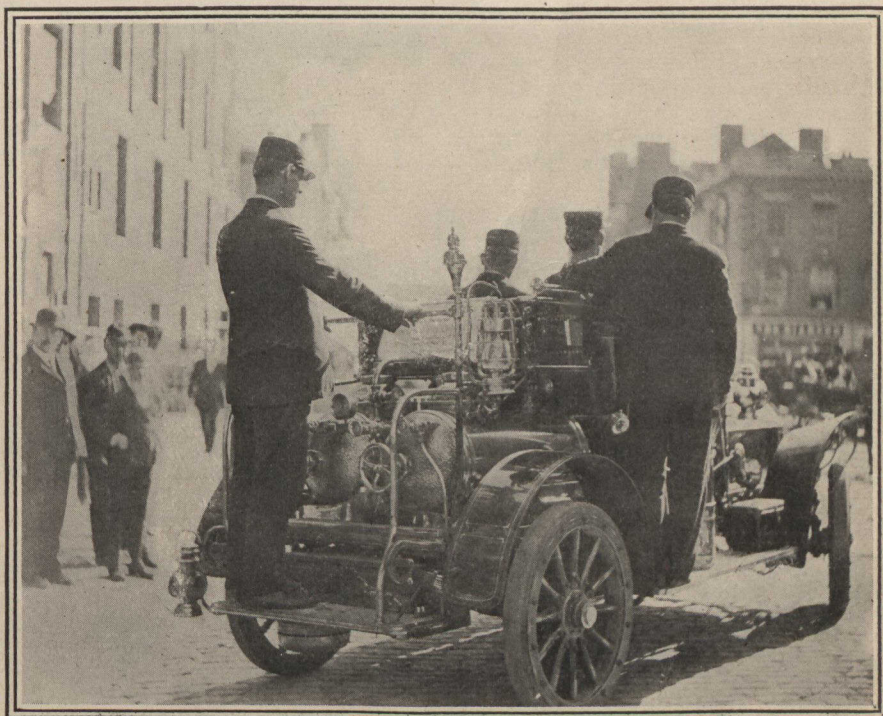


Some Fire-Fighting Autos Starting Out for a Road Test

COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHS BY WALDON FAWCETT



One of the Newest Types—Combination Chemical Engine and Auto.



Rear View of a Somewhat Similar Machine.

Automobiles and Fire-Fighting

By DONALD B. SINCLAIR

CANADIAN cities seem to be lagging behind in equipping their fire departments with automobiles and their police departments with gasoline vans and ambulances. The cities of Europe and the United States have adopted the new machines, in a measure, and find them satisfactory. Vancouver, alone, of Canadian cities has made a step in this direction.

Is it because the chiefs of these departments, like the chiefs of old, maintain a love for horses which prejudices them against the auto? Or is it that they hesitate to deprive the citizens of the picturesque scene presented when the well-groomed, amiable teams fly along the streets after the fire-alarm sounds? Or is it that Canadian conservatism which is akin to Scotch shrewdness causes us to wait until these modern machines are more highly perfected?

According to Controller Ward, Acting Mayor of Toronto, the question of displacing the horses in the fire department has never been brought before the City Council. Chief Thompson admitted he had asked the city for a gasoline runabout to assist him in his inspectorial duties and that the City Council had refused his request.

"Was your action, Mr. Thompson, in asking for an automobile a hint to the Council that you would

follow it up with recommending that horses be done away with and motors used in drawing the fire-engines?"

"Not at all, not at all," the chief replied brusquely and became silent. Then he smiled an Irish smile. "A council that wouldn't grant me even a runabout is hardly likely to go into the motor business on the scale you suggest," he said.

Toronto's Fire Chief showed himself thoroughly conversant with all the latest frills, fads and fancies in fire-fighting. He had thought long and shrewdly about the question of propelling the machines by motor power. His attitude towards it was the Missourian's "You'll have to show me." Briefly summed up, the following are the reasons advanced by him why Toronto does not ape London, Berlin, New York, Washington and Vancouver:—

First, the climatic conditions of northern cities like Toronto are not favourable to the use of motors as a means of locomotion the whole year round. The heavy snow of winter would render a motor useless in attempting to drag a steam-fire engine weighing six or seven tons with the speed requisite for fire service.

Secondly, motor engines had not as yet reached that high state of development when they could be depended upon absolutely, as would be necessary in the critical situation of fire. Of course, they had worked well as yet where they had been tried in this connection; but time would tell.

Thirdly, the cost of installing a motor system

would be enormously out of proportion to the benefit that would be received from it. The present system met every need. A steam fire-engine of the type now employed by the city costing \$5,000 would cost ten or eleven thousand dollars of the motor design. The rapid changes that are made from year to year in motors would necessitate replacing them all the time with new ones. This would be further expense and bother. Another item was the repair bill.

Fourthly, the narrow, and in many cases not too well-paved streets of Toronto would be a great handicap in controlling engines at full speed. Toronto streets are not Washington streets by a long way.

To conclude, the Chief expressed himself as distinctly opposed to the new motor fire-engines for the reasons above indicated. The only service automobiles could render the Toronto Fire Department would be to have several large, ordinary cars that would hold a dozen men or more, and use them to quickly transfer the firemen from point to point and bring up reinforcements in case of a general conflagration. He did not think the City Council would feel inclined to provide these, but they could be utilised with advantage if they did.

So, if we are to believe Fire Chief Thompson and the rest, the general aspect of things seems to indicate that the Fire Department horses have a good chance of holding down their jobs yet awhile. It is not exactly a question of up-to-dateness; it's rather one of fate.