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HOME OFFICE (FIRE BRIGADES DIVISION),
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F.B.Gen.18/8/2

14th June, 1940.

FIRE PROTECTION OF CROPS
F.B.Circular No. 77/1940

Sir,

I am directed by the Minister of Home Security to say that he has had under consideration the question of precautions against damage to crops from incendiary bombs.

Advice to Farmers.

1. A copy will be forwarded as soon as available for your information and guidance, of a leaflet which, after consultation with this Division, has been issued to farmers by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, giving advice as to the steps which can be taken by them, both on their own account and by arrangement with local fire brigades, to minimise the risk of loss during the period this summer when the crops will be susceptible to damage from fire. Your attention is particularly drawn to the final paragraph of this leaflet, dealing with local fire services. The Minister has no doubt that the fire authorities concerned will wish to give all facilities to local farmers for the training of their personnel in the use of appliances which can be made available locally for fighting fires in crops.

Fire Fighting Appliances, Training of Personnel, etc.

(a) Light trailer pumps.

2. In order to assist the fire authorities concerned, steps have been, or are being, taken to deliver to Rural District Councils in the main corn growing areas (see attached schedule), who have submitted air raid fire precautions schemes, all the light trailer pumps which it had been decided to allocate for the purposes of their emergency measures on the basis of their formal schemes. In addition, the Minister will be prepared to issue to such Councils, one or more light trailer pumps specifically for use in protecting crops during the danger period, subject to the conditions mentioned below.

3. The number of additional pumps so required in the case of the various fire

The Town Clerk
The Clerk to the Council.
The Chief Officer of the Fire Brigade.

authorities will depend in the main on the availability of trained crews to man them and keep them effectively manned. Such crews may be found from fire party personnel recruited in the villages or from among farm workers who can be spared to attend for training under arrangements made between local farmers and the fire authority. In the case of the latter, time will in many cases only permit of an abridged syllabus of training, say, of 10 hours covering the main points of trailer pump drill and the laying and manipulation of hose and branchpipes.

4. There will be no objection to trailer pumps being stationed by the fire authority at individual farms during the danger period, provided that trained crews are kept always available to man them at short notice.

5. Any Rural District Council whose area is comprised in the main corn-growing areas in England set out in the attached schedule is requested to state, at the earliest possible date, the number of light trailer pumps, additional to the total of such pumps authorised in respect of the Council's scheme, which are required in the rural district on the footing mentioned above. It should be understood that the loan to fire authorities of any additional light trailer pumps in these circumstances will be temporary, and the pumps may have to be transferred as soon as the danger period for crops in the rural district is past, or for other reasons.

(b) Mobile Water Units.

6. As supplies become available, 100 gallon canvas dams will be supplied for use with each Home Office light trailer pump. These dams could be utilised to supplement any existing or improvised water supplies at the farms (see paragraph 5 of the Ministry of Agriculture leaflet). The Department is also exploring the possibilities of providing on temporary loan, to Rural District Councils co-operating in the scheme outlined in this circular, a limited number of dams of 500 and 1000 gallons capacity. For this purpose Rural District Councils in the areas comprised in the attached schedule are requested to state how many such dams (in addition to any already being delivered to the Council) they can undertake to mount as mobile water carrying units. (See F.B. Circular No.11/1940 on mobile water supplies). It may also be possible to obtain on loan, from the Roads Departments of County Councils and neighbouring urban authorities, water carrying vehicles which are not required in present circumstances for purposes of road construction or maintenance.

(c) Hand pumping Appliances.

7. As regards the two-man manual pumps required for the purposes of the air raid fire precautions schemes of Rural District Councils, every effort will be made to arrange for the delivery of the full allocation already authorised in the case of fire authorities in the main corn-growing areas. As two-man manual pumps are delivered locally, arrangements should be made, as in the case of the light trailer pumps, for training personnel in their use, specifically for fighting fires in crops.

8. In the case of stirrup hand pumps also, deliveries are being made of the full numbers authorised for the purposes of the local air raid fire precautions schemes of Rural District Councils comprised in the attached schedule, and additional supplies of stirrup hand pumps, up to 50% of the allocation already authorised, will also be made available on a loan basis to these Rural District Councils under the following conditions:-

(1) The primary condition of supply is that the fire authorities undertake to organise and train parties, consisting of at least three persons per pump, for fire fighting duties at farms. The fire authority will be responsible, in collaboration with local farmers, for the selection of the farms at which the stirrup hand pumps are to be kept.

(2) The training of the members of the parties will be carried out by the personnel of the regular fire brigades and by the Auxiliary Fire Service. No payment of fees to instructors is contemplated.

(3) The training should include at least the following:-

(a) Demonstration and Drill with Stirrup Hand Pumps - ½ hour.

(b) Practice in extinguishing fires - 1 hour.

(c) Practice in organisation of Bucket Lines - ½ hour.

Attention should also be drawn to the use of Stirrup Hand Pumps, failing any of the larger appliances, for wetting down operations (see paragraph 8B of the Ministry of Agriculture's leaflet referred to above). Training should be commenced as soon as any training classes have been formed, and any hand pumps already available locally should be used, if necessary, in advance of the special issues now to be made for the purposes of this scheme.

(4) The parties should be held responsible for the proper care of the pumps, for seeing that buckets are available and for replacing any pump which is lost or damaged by neglect or default.

(5) The members of the fire parties will not be regarded as forming an integral part of the Auxiliary Fire Service, and no other equipment than the stirrup hand pumps will be issued to them.

9. There will be no objection to Rural District Councils arranging to borrow temporarily, stirrup hand pumps from neighbouring Borough and Urban District Councils who are co-operating with the Department in the supplementary fire parties scheme outlined in F.B. Circulars Nos. 33 and 62/1940 addressed to urban authorities.

10. Any Rural District Council whose area is comprised in the attached schedule is requested to inform this Division at the earliest possible date whether they are prepared to co-operate in this scheme and to notify the Department of the additional numbers of stirrup hand pumps required, on the conditions mentioned above, within the limit of 50% of the stirrup hand pumps already authorised by the Department for the local air raid fire precautions scheme.

11. A number of Rural District Councils in the main corn-growing districts have not yet submitted air raid fire precautions schemes to this Division. The provision in kind by this Department of any emergency fire fighting appliances is contingent on the submission of such schemes. It will, however, be open to Rural District Councils which have not hitherto prepared emergency measures to apply to this Department to co-operate in the foregoing scheme and appliances may be issued in these cases on the understanding that a formal air raid fire precautions scheme will be submitted later. Any appliances then provided will be issued under the conditions set out in the Air Raid Precautions (Loan of Fire Appliances) Regulations 1938.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J.G. MacIver

Issued to:-

All Fire Authorities and
Chief Officers of Fire Brigades
in England and Wales.

SCHEDULE OF MAIN CORN-GROWING AREAS Ø IN ENGLAND

(See paragraphs 5, 6 and 10 of F.B. Circular No. 77/1940).

The main corn-growing areas comprise all Rural Districts in the following Counties:-

Yorkshire, East Riding	Huntingdonshire
Lincolnshire	Cambridgeshire
Rutland	Norfolk
Soke of Peterborough	Suffolk
Isle of Ely	Essex.

and in addition, the following Rural Districts:-

Flaxton, Malton (Yorkshire, North Riding);
Doncaster, Goole, Osgoldcross, Selby, Tadcaster and Thorne (Yorkshire, West Riding);
East Retford, Newark, Southwell and Worksop (Nottinghamshire);
Braughing and Hitchin, (Hertfordshire).

Ø Those areas have been selected on the advice of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries as being high-yield areas with extensive stretches of corn.