



SUPPLEMENT

To the HONGKONG GOVERNMENT GAZETTE of 29th January, 1887.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 41.

The following Report from the Acting Superintendent of Fire Brigade is published for general information.

By Command,

FREDERICK STEWART,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 29th January, 1887.

No. 2.

FIRE BRIGADE DEPARTMENT,
7th January, 1887.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the following report of the Government Fire Brigade for the year ending 31st December, 1886.

During the year the Fire Brigade has performed important work which, as regards efficiency, is creditable, though not by any means perfect.

The rapid growth of the Colony demanding additional facilities for extinguishing fires, I recommended the Government early last year to purchase two additional Steam Engines which I proposed to station in the eastern and western districts to be on the spot in case of fire occurring in either locality. The Government sanctioned the purchase of one engine which is on its way from England, and a Steam Fire Pump has been fitted to the Steam-launch *Stanley*, which, if placed at the disposal of the Brigade, will bring up the strength of the available Fire Engines to the following:—

No. 1	Merryweather,	.....	Floating Steamer.
No. 2	Do.	.....	Land do.
No. 3	Shand Mason & Co.	.....	do. do.
No. 4	Do.	.....	do. do.
No. 5	Do.	.....	do. do. expected from England.
No. 6	Deane's (floating)	.....	fitted in steam-launch <i>Stanley</i> .
Manuals—9 in number stationed in different parts of the Colony.			

No. 2 Engine has been 16 years in service, and is now fitted with new steam cylinders and valve casing which will render the engine serviceable for some years.

The Government offices and other important centres have been supplied with hose and stand pipes.

With regard to fire alarms, a new bell has been supplied to the clock tower, and the bell of No. 5 Station has been raised so that its sound can be heard at a greater distance. These, however, are anything but perfect as fire alarms, as considerable time must of necessity elapse between the outbreak of a fire and communication to the station. This has been proved several times by the advanced state which the conflagration had reached on the arrival of the first engine.

The whole of the hose for the steam engines has been fitted with couplings on the Metropolitan Fire Brigade pattern which greatly facilitates connecting the lengths of hose.

The engines have been periodically overhauled, and carefully examined and tested, and are all in first rate order, though I should recommend a new Fire-box for No. 3 Engine during the current year.

Weekly drills have been held for instruction of Drivers and Firemen in their respective duties, when steam has been raised on each engine in turn. The system of fines sanctioned by His Excellency has proved successful in the increased attendance at weekly parades, and a greater attention to cleanliness and dress. The whole of the Chinese firemen have been supplied with belts and hose-wrenches, and have been instructed in elementary fire drill.

Considerable difficulty frequently arises at low water spring tides in obtaining water at various parts of the Praya, when the floating engine proves invaluable. The dredging operations, when completed on the fore-shore, will remove what has at times been a great difficulty.

Our staff at present consists of:—

1 Superintendent.
 1 Assistant Superintendent.
 1 Do. Do. and Engineer.
 1 Clerk.
 1 Assistant Engineer.
 2 Engine Drivers, Chinese.
 3 Do., Europeans.
 2 Assistant Engine Drivers, Europeans.
 6 Stokers.
 1 Overseer of Water Works.
 1 Inspector of Dangerous Goods.
 1 Chinese Assistant Do.,
 2 Foremen.

4 Assistant Foremen.
 17 Firemen, Europeans.
 46 Do., Chinese.
 30 Do., Market Coolies.
 10 Chinese Contingent.
 15 Watchmen.

Floating Engine.

1 Assistant Foreman and Engine Driver.
 1 Chinese Engine Driver.
 1 Stoker.
 2 Seamen.

Since the post of second Assistant Superintendent has been abolished and the joint appointment of Assistant Superintendent and Engineer has been made, a greater responsibility has fallen on the Acting Assistant Engineer, as the Engineer in his dual capacity is frequently called away to the scene of the fire, and must leave the Engines in charge of the next in command.

Looking to the increased duties that devolve upon the Engineer and his Assistant, who now have to keep in an efficient state six steam engines and nine manuals, I consider the remuneration, which was voted at a time when there were only two steam engines, is somewhat inadequate to the increased duties and responsibilities.

At the Annual General Inspection in November last, a new feature was introduced in the form of competition at Fire drills for prizes, which acted as a stimulus to the members of the Brigades and gave them greater interest in their work; and amongst the Chinese particularly, this has resulted in bringing to the front some really valuable firemen. As an instance of the efficiency of the Brigades, I may mention that at the recent fire which occurred in Bonham Strand on a Sunday afternoon, within the space of a few minutes of the alarm being sounded, thirteen powerful jets of water were playing upon the burning houses.

At first sight our Brigade appears to be not only adequate as regards machinery, but also numerically, but when it is borne in mind that not more than half of the Europeans are available at any one fire, and that the hilly configuration of the Colony often requires two engines to do the work of one in order to reach the elevation required, it will be seen that the Brigade is under, rather than over, the necessary strength for a growing Colony like Hongkong.

The supply of water from the new Water-works (in course of construction) will materially assist in extinguishing fires in the upper levels of the Colony, and also in the early stages of all fires, if my suggestion with regard to telephonic communication is adopted. But the value of water mains must not be over-estimated, as in a case similar to that in Bonham Strand (referred to before) it would be impossible to concentrate such a body of water at any one given point from hydrants as could be obtained by steam Engines, and the superiority of salt water over fresh, for extinguishing fires is universally acknowledged.

I cannot close this report without mentioning the able assistance I have had during the past year from the Officers of the Brigade. I may specially mention Mr. WAGNER, who has been acting as Engineer and Assistant Superintendent, Mr. RAE, the chief foreman, and Mr. CAMPBELL, Acting Assistant Engineer. These officers have devoted a great deal of time and attention to their respective duties and the present efficiency of the Brigade is in a great measure due to their untiring exertions.

We are greatly indebted to the Captain Superintendent of Police for the excellent order kept by his force at the various fires. The systematic working of the Brigade, and absence of malicious injury to hose and larceny of Government property, is greatly owing to the vigilance of the Police.

Subjoined is a tabulated form showing the number of alarms of Fires, and estimated damage for the past year.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN S. BREWER,
Acting Superintendent Fire Brigade.

The Honourable F. STEWART, LL.D.,

Acting Colonial Secretary,

&c., &c., &c.

RETURN OF FIRES AND ALARMS OCCURRED DURING THE YEAR 1886.

No.	Date.	Time.	Situation of Fire.	No. of Building destroyed.		Damage.	Cause.	REMARKS.
				Wholly.	Partly.			
1	January 1	...	Grass on hillside West of Mount Davis, .....	...	...	Unknown	Unknown,	Some thousands of young fir trees were destroyed.
2	" 3	...	A bed curtain in No. 42, Circular Pathway, .....	...	None	None	Do.	
3	" 3	...	A stack of grass at the back of Joss house at Shaukiwán, .....	...	\$15	Trifling	Do.	
4	" 4	...	Chimney of No. 27, Gage Street, .....	...	None	None	Carelessness with a lighted cigar,	A number of Chinese account books burnt.
5	" 4	...	Praya Central, Blackhead & Co.'s Store, .....	...	None	None	Unknown.	
6	" 5	5.15 p.m.	Saw dust in No. 21, Pound Lane, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Carelessness with matches.	
7	" 5	7.30 p.m.	Near Shaukiwán Market, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Sparks from the Engine House.	
8	" 8	...	Grass above Tai-tam-tuk Water-Works, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Unknown.	
9	" 9	...	Grass on the hillside at Mount Davis, .....	...	\$60	Trifling	Do.	
10	" 13	8 p.m.	A stack of grass at Shaukiwán, .....	...	None	None	Accidental when cooking.	
11	" 14	5.30 a.m.	A matshed at Coffee Plantation, .....	...	None	None	Burning Incense.	
12	" 19	...	Trap door No. 297, Queen's Road Central, .....	...	\$3	Trifling	Unknown.	
13	" 19	12.50 a.m.	A bed curtain and beddings in No. 41, East Street, .....	...	\$3	None	Unknown.	
14	" 20	...	Matshed at Hungghò Docks,	1	\$15	None	Do.	
15	" 26	1.20 a.m.	Cook-house No. 61, Praya West, .....	...	None	None	Do.	
16	" 30	...	A stack of grass at Taikoktsui, .....	...	\$30	None	Do.	
17	" 30	5.30 p.m.	Grass on the hill near Parsee Point, .....	...	None	None	Do.	
18	" 31	6.30 p.m.	Chimney of No. 4, Blue Buildings, .....	...	None	None	Do.	
19	February 2	2.20 p.m.	No. 186, Hollywood Road, (Po Lok Theatre),	Whole Block	\$30,000	None	Kerosene Lamp,	Two girls aged 9 and 5 years respectively were burned to death.
20	" 2	...	Matshed at No. 2, Gap Street, .....	...	None	None	Unknown.	
21	" 2	9 p.m.	Stack of grass at Quarry Bay,	1	\$50	Trifling	Do.	
22	" 3	3.30 a.m.	Wooden partition at No. 49, West Street, .....	...	Trifling	Trifling	Incense Sticks.	
23	" 9	...	Chimney at No. 1, Seymour Terrace, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Unknown.	
24	" 9	9 p.m.	Stack of grass at Shaukiwán, .....	...	\$140	Do.	Do.	
25	" 15	3.15 p.m.	Matsheds at Naval Yard, Kaulung, .....	...	\$4,000	None	Do.	
26	" 26	5.45 p.m.	Chimney at No. 11, Cochrane Street, .....	...	None	None	Do.	
27	March 4	...	Grass on the hill at Mount Davis, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Do.	
28	" 7	4 p.m.	Chimney at No. 3, Taipingshán Street, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Do.	
29	" 11	10.40 p.m.	Matsheds at Belchers Battery,	7	\$280	Do.	Do.	
30	" 17	Midnight	No. 3, Wing Fung Street,	1	\$1,200	Slight	Kerosene Lamp.	
31	" 21	6.10 p.m.	No. 8, Wai Tak Lane, .....	...	Slight	Slight	Do.	
32	April 6	3 a.m.	No. 56, Market Street, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Do.	
33	" 22	...	Chimney at Hongkong Club, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Unknown.	
34	" 27	5 p.m.	Chimney at No. 5 Station, .....	...	None	None	Do.	
35	" 3	4 a.m.	Staircase of No. 149, Queen's Road West, .....	...	Slight	Slight	Do.	
36	" 6	3.20 a.m.	No. 84, Queen's Road East, .....	...	Unknown	Unknown	Kerosene Lamp.	Half catty of Kerosene was found.
37	" 9	3 a.m.	Wooden partition at Gilman Bazaar,	1	Trifling	Trifling	Unknown.	
38	" 13	2 a.m.	No. 116, Praya West, .....	...	None	None	Do.	
39	" 22	3 a.m.	Mosquito curtain in No. 266, Queen's Road West, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Do.	
40	" 25	11.15 p.m.	Chimney of No. 235, Queen's Road Central, .....	...	Do.	Do.	Do.	

RETURN OF FIRES AND ALARMS OCCURRED DURING THE YEAR 1886,—Continued.

No.	Date.	Time.	Situation of Fire.	No. of Build- ing destroyed.		Damage.	Cause.	REMARKS.
				Wholly.	Partly.			
41	May 30	11.30 a.m.	Third Street, .....	..	..	Slight	Unknown.	
42	" 31	8.30 a.m.	Mosquito curtain at No. 10, Jardine Bazaar, .....	..	..	Do.	Children playing with candles.	
43	June 30	2.30 p.m.	Firewood in cook-house of No. 3, Hin Lung Lane, .....	..	..	Do.	Unknown.	
44	July 3	7.30 a.m.	No. 50, Jardine Bazaar, .....	..	..	None	Kerosene Lamp.	
45	" 3	Midnight	No. 4, Square Street, .....	..	..	Do.	Rags and Paper.	
46	" 6	5.30 p.m.	Chimney at No. 224, Queen's Road West, .....	..	..	Very little	Unknown.	
47	" 7	4.45 p.m.	Chimney of Medical Hall, .....	..	..	None	Do.	
48	" 24	10.30 a.m.	Firewood in the kitchen of No. 31, Gough Street, .....	..	..	Trifling	Do.	
49	" 30	...	A piece of cloth at No. 9, Wellington Street, .....	..	..	None	Do.	
50	August 3	12.45 a.m.	Chimney of No. 21, Ladder Street, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
51	" 13	9.45 p.m.	No. 24, Circular Pathway, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
52	" 13	5 p.m.	Roof of No. 17, Praya East, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
53	" 14	Noon.	A Hut above Kennedy Road, .....	..	..	\$5	Incendiary,	While Chun-fat was
54	" 17	8.30 p.m.	Chimney at No. 27, Hollywood Road, .....	..	..	Trifling	Unknown.	prosecuting 3 men
55	" 20	10 a.m.	Soldering shed at Bowington, .....	..	..	\$300	Overheating a soldering iron.	for larceny at the
56	" 26	9.30 p.m.	Mat-bags at No. 4, First Street, .....	..	..	Trifling	Accidental.	Police Court a gang
57	" 30	Noon.	Chimney at Tung Wa Hospital, .....	..	..	Do.	Unknown.	of their friends set
58	September 5	7.30 p.m.	No. 41, Cochrane Street, .....	..	..	Do.	Kerosene Lamp.	fire to his hut.
59	" 8	11.30 a.m.	Matcheds above Kennedy Road,	2	..	\$500	Unknown.	
60	" 9	...	Grass on hillside near Aberdeen, .....	..	..	Trifling	Do.	
61	" 11	11 p.m.	No. 3, Ezra Lane, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
62	" 12	4.20 a.m.	No. 324, Queen's Road West, .....	..	..	Do.	Mat Screen.	
63	" 15	4 p.m.	Grass on hill near Cape D'Agular and Stanley Road, .....	..	..	Do.	Unknown.	
64	" 17	7 p.m.	No. 41, Salt-fish Lane,	1	..	\$3,500	Do.	
65	" 17	6.30 p.m.	A Kerosene Lamp No. 47, Hollywood Road, .....	..	..	None	Lamp burst.	
66	" 19	4 p.m.	Grass on hillside near Chai Wan, .....	..	..	Trifling	Unknown.	
67	" 27	10 a.m.	Chimney of No. 10, Queen's Road Central, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
68	" 29	...	Chimney of No. 18, Hollywood Road, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
69	October 2	5.45 p.m.	Carpet in Hongkong Hotel, .....	..	..	None	Do.	
70	" 6	...	Grass on Mount Davis, .....	..	..	Do.	Set on fire while worshipping graves.	
71	" 11	6 a.m.	A mosquito curtain in No. 5, Third Street, .....	..	..	Trifling	Unknown.	
72	" 11	9 p.m.	A match at Stone Cutters' Island,	1	..	\$50	Do.	
73	" 12	6.30 p.m.	No. 3, Kau U Fong, .....	..	..	None	Upsetting of a lighted lamp.	
74	" 21	10.45 p.m.	No. 3, Tuk Hing Lane,	2	..	\$12,000	Upsetting of a Kerosene Lamp by a cat.	
75	" 22	...	Grass on hill near Tai-tan-tuk, .....	..	..	None	Unknown.	
76	" 22	12.30 p.m.	Some mats on No. 51, Caine Road, .....	..	..	Trifling	Do.	
77	" 29	5.50 p.m.	Some wood in No. 225, Queen's Road West, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
78	November 2	12.50 p.m.	Chimney of Tsimshatsui Station, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
79	" 2	7.20 p.m.	Chimney of No. 95, Second Street, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	
80	" 6	...	Grass on hillside near Stanley, .....	..	..	Do.	Do.	

RETURN OF FIRES AND ALARMS OCCURRED DURING THE YEAR 1886,—Continued.

No.	Date.	Time.	Situation of Fire.	No. of Buildings destroyed.		Damage.	Cause.	REMARKS.
				Wholly.	Partly.			
81	November 8,	...	Chimney of No. 39, Pottinger Street,.....	...	...	Trifling	Unknown.	
82	" 10,	...	No. 218, Hollywood Road, .....	...	...	Do.	Upsetting of a Kerosene Lamp.	
83	" 10,	...	A bundle of firewood in No. 10, West Street, .....	...	...	None	Unknown.	
84	" 11,	10.30 a.m.	Rattan shavings in No. 15, Tik Lung Lane, .....	...	...	Do.	Do.	
85	" 13,	5.15 a.m.	A mattress in No. 74, Praya East, .....	...	...	Do.	Do.	
86	" 20,	...	Flooring of No. 88, Bridges Street, .....	...	...	Trifling	Fire from cooking stove.	
87	" 20,	7.15 p.m.	Cook-house No. 6, Praya, Hungghò,.....	...	...	\$5	Some matting caught fire.	
88	" 22,	...	No. 17, Hollywood Road, .....	...	...	\$270	Explosion of a Kerosene Lamp.	
89	" 24,	...	Horse Repository, Garden Road, .....	...	...	\$7	Unknown.	
90	" 24,	5.40 p.m.	A mosquito curtain No. 60, Praya, Yaumati,	10	1	\$40,000	Do.	
91	" 26,	9 p.m.	No. 106, Queen's Road West, .....	...	...	None	Cap sizing of a Kerosene Lamp.	
92	" 26,	7 p.m.	Chimney No. 36, Praya Central, .....	...	...	Slight	Unknown.	
93	" 29,	5 p.m.	A mosquito curtain No. 7, Circular Pathway, .....	...	...	\$1.20	Do.	
94	December 5,	5 p.m.	A mosquito curtain Square Street, .....	...	...	Unknown	Do.	
95	" 7,	...	Hillside near North Fort,.....	...	...	Trifling	Unknown,	Some young trees and grass burned down.
96	" 11,	1 p.m.	Bed board at No. 23, Taipingshan Street, .....	...	...	Do.	Burning of Joss Paper.	
97	" 13,	...	Grass on the hill at Aberdeen, .....	...	...	None	Unknown.	
98	" 15,	10 a.m.	Hills East of Tai-tam-tuk Village,	4	...	Do.	Do.	
99	" 15,	5 a.m.	No. 91, Queen's Road West, .....	...	2	Do.	Accidental when cooking.	
100	" 16,	12.30 p.m.	Grass on hill between Chaiwan and Shekò, .....	...	...	Do.	Unknown.	
101	" 17,	7 a.m.	No. 223, Queen's Road West,	3	...	\$16,000	Spilling of fat in fire.	
102	" 17,	8 p.m.	Wooden partition at No. 20, Jervois Street, .....	...	...	None	Unknown.	
103	" 19,	5.40 p.m.	No. 67, Bonham Strand West,	1	2	\$18,000	Carelessness with a candle.	
104	" 20,	1.40 a.m.	Mat-bags in No. 155, Praya West, .....	...	...	Trifling	Unknown.	
105	" 20,	...	A coal godown in Ship Street, .....	...	...	None	Do.	
106	" 22,	3 p.m.	Cook-house of No. 42, Jervois Street, .....	...	...	Do.	Do.	
107	" 24,	5 p.m.	A match in Italian Convent's Garden at Kaulung, .....	...	...	\$80	Do.	
108	" 25,	8.30 p.m.	Chimney of No. 91, Praya West, .....	...	...	None	Do.	
109	" 28,	7 p.m.	1st floor of No. 23, East Street, .....	...	...	Do.	Bursting of a Kerosene Lamp.	
110	" 29,	5 p.m.	A mosquito curtain and some bed clothing in No. 49, Square Street, .....	...	...	Trifling	Burning of Joss Paper.	
111	" 29,	6.30 p.m.	Grass on hill between Gap and Mount Kellett,.....	...	...	Do.	Unknown.	
112	" 29,	7 p.m.	Grass on the hillside above Pokfulam Road,.....	...	...	Do.	Do.	

JOHN S. BREWER,
Acting Superintendent Fire Brigade.