

Civil Defence Display

Realistic Exercise on Recreation Ground

C.T. April 3, 1943

Last Saturday afternoon the National Fire service and Civil Defence invited the public to come and see them at work. The public wholeheartedly accepted the invitation. At the same time, the N.F.S and C.D. took the opportunity of putting themselves through an exercise with almost everything real—except fore-knowledge as to what was going to happen. And, finally, as if the above were not sufficient justification for a large scale display and demonstration, a sum of money was raised by the efforts for the Christchurch Aid to China fund.

In all, it was a very worthwhile afternoon.

It was the first time the public had had such a good opportunity of seeing many phases of these two defence services duties in an “emergency.” It was the first time the fully equipped and trained Fire Guard demonstrated their job of work. What we saw was interesting and satisfying: a tribute to the Government in perfecting the plans and equipment, and a tribute to those who have, locally, so well trained the personnel in whose hands the plans, and equipment now rest.

Representatives of the different departments marched to the recreation ground from the Quay. Headed by the band of the Home Guard, there were Army Cadets, the N.F.S., the N.F.S. girls (grand marchers), Wardens, the Report Centre, Red Cross, W.V.S., W.V.S. Housewives’ Service, Rest Centres and Scouts.

After selections by the H.G. and N.F.S. bands, a competition between three teams of Fire Guards opened the programme. Fires had been lit and there were dummy walls from behind which the conflagrations were attacked until the explosive charge went off. The winning team, representing business premises, was: No. 1, Mrs. King Smith; No. 2, Mrs. Lyle; No. 3, Miss Furneaux. The runners-up, also a ladies team were: No. 1, Miss E. Galbraith; No. 2, Miss Norman; No. 3, Miss Horsford.

The mere men in this competition were most unfortunate. There must have been a spot of fifth column work about! They had to fight their fire with a dud stirrup pump! Hard luck men! The team was: No. 1, P. Tizard No. 2, J. Little; No. 3, E.C. Brett; and in fairness to them it must be said that they very graciously congratulated the ladies on the success (though you should have heard what they called that stirrup pump).

An amusing item which followed showed how not to tackle incendiary bombs. The No, 1 in the crazy F.G. team started off by being Warden HARRY, No one knew which was No, 2 and which No. 3 out of Wardens Dixon and Holmes

A demonstration of remote breathing apparatus showed how rescue workers can bring casualties out of a coal gas concentration. The team, N. Horlock, J. Winters and W. Hicks, were members of the decontamination squad trained in rescue. The casualty, J. Hicks, was removed over a distance of 24 feet in less than two minutes, and afterwards fully recovered under artificial respiration administered by the F.A.P.

The high spot on the programme was a mock air raid entitled on the programme, “China Crescent is Blitzed.” China Crescent consisted of a number of one storey shacks with a four storey scaffolding which served to demonstrate the rescue of casualties by means of the Reading sling and a slung stretcher.

Fires in two of the premises on China Crescent, which spread beyond the control of the Fire Guard teams, brought the N.F.S. into action. Before the second one could be approached the water mains were presumed to have been hit. Hoses were laid from the

nearest available supply and a dam filled near the burning properties, .From this a trailer pump rapidly extinguished the flames at "No. 5."

During this demonstration the public was introduced to the Incident Officer, who takes control of all services at a large incident, to the work of wardens, and to the close, co-operation between all C.D. Services, and between C.D. and the N.F.S.

The running commentary on the raid— and even the siren which preceded it—was by Mr. Griffiths, A.R.P. Officer. The two very large explosions were by the military.

The programme concluded with a display of N.F.S. special appliances. This now very highly equipped service, demonstrated a mobile water tower, control van and field telephone unit, salvage tender and foam tender,

The organisation of the display was mainly in the hands of Company Officer Bryant and A.R.P, Officer Griffiths.

At the conclusion, his Worship the Mayor, who was accompanied by the Mayoress, presented prizes to the winning Fire Guard team, who received silver-plated tea infusers. The person who submitted the closest estimate of the time required by the winning team to extinguish their fire was Mr. Charles Masters, of 8, Gardiner(Gardner) Road. He was awarded a case of spoons. The holder of programme number 189 was awarded a prize of a 15/- savings certificate.