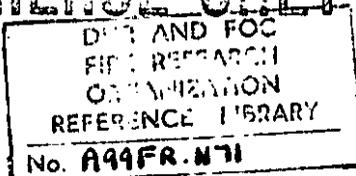


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REPORT ON A VISIT TO A FIRE AT DALY'S CONDENSERS, LTD.,
THE GREEN, EALING

by

D. Hird

July, 1953.

Fire Research Station,
Boreham Wood,
Herts.

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THE GREEN, BAILING

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Introduction

At the invitation of D. O. Moss, Fire Prevention Officer of Middlesex Fire Brigade, a visit was paid to the scene of the fire on Tuesday, 30th June, 1953.

Description of occurrence

The fire occurred on the night of Monday, 29th June, some time between 10 p.m. when the staff left and 10.42 p.m. when the fire brigade received the call. The part of the building involved consisted of a large room (approximately 100 ft. x 40 ft.) on the first floor of the factory. About half the room was partitioned off, and used for the assembly of electrical components. Also partitioned off was a small rest room and kitchen. Much of this partitioning as well as some of the ceilings were of fibre insulating board supported on a wooden framework. The three outside walls of the room were mainly glazed, and the other wall separating the room from the rest of the building was of brick. The roof was of asbestos cement sheeting on unprotected steel trusses.

Description of damage

Beyond a mattress and a little furniture in the kitchen and rest room there was little combustible material in the room other than the partitions, ceilings and floor. The damage, however, was very heavy to the machinery and stock used in assembly. The asbestos cement roofing had completely shattered, but the unprotected steel trusses were not distorted, probably due to the venting of the fire by the shattering of the roof.

Cause of fire

The cause of the fire will no doubt be recorded as unknown. It must have started soon after the staff, mainly part-time female workers, had left the building at 10 p.m., as on discovery just after 10.30 p.m. the fire was through the roof. There appeared to be more damage to the wooden floor of the rest room than to other parts of the building. The rapid growth of the fire was undoubtedly due to the fibre insulating board partitions and ceilings, and could possibly have been started by a carelessly discarded cigarette in the rest room.

Conclusions

The contents of the room were mainly incombustible or not readily combustible and one would not have expected the fire to have developed so quickly, or the damage to have been so great under these circumstances. However the presence of fibre insulating board partitions and ceilings provided a large area of combustible material permitting rapid flame spread, and resulting in the rapid growth of fire and extensive damage of the contents. This illustrates the fact that extensive damage may be caused by fire to the contents of a building even if they are all incombustible if a combustible material permitting rapid flame spread forms part of the structure.