

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The first attempt to establish a Fire Department in the City of Oakland was made in the early part of 1853, which resulted in the organization of two engine companies, the Empire and Washington and the Oakland Hook and Ladder Company, and the election of John Scott as Chief Engineer. Three large cisterns, which still remain in use, were soon after constructed on Broadway, between First and Fourth streets, to supply the engines with water, and the necessary apparatus was obtained to give efficiency to the operations of the Department. The apparatus then used by the Empire Company, a small New York side-stroke engine, purchased originally at a cost of \$2,000, is now in the Santa Clara Fire Department, in good condition. This organization had but a short-lived existence. It was within a year disbanded, the property delivered over to the Council, and up to 1869, Oakland had little or no means of resisting the fiery element.

The present Department was organized March 13, 1869, under the provisions of an ordinance approved February 4, 1869, by the election of John C. Halley as Chief Engineer, and Thomas McGuire and George Taylor, Assistants, who succeeded John Scott, Chief, and John C. Halley and W. W. Moore, Assistants, acting under authority of a previous organization. The apparatus of the Department comprised a third-class Amoskeag fire engine, purchased by the city, and a hose carriage procured by funds temporarily advanced by Col. John Scott. The succeeding officers elected in 1870, were: Miles Doody, Chief Engineer; George Taylor and G. W. Scribner, Assistants; who continued in office until January 16, 1872, when George Taylor was elected Chief Engineer, and R. E. Harmon and George Farwell, Assistants, who in turn were succeeded by the present officers.

The organization of the Department is at present composed of a Board of eight Fire Commissioners, a Chief Engineer, and two Assistants. The apparatus consists of two steam engines, two hand engines, and two hook and ladder trucks; each engine has a hose carriage. The steamers and two of the hose carriages are drawn by horses.

Water for the use of the Department is obtained from forty-five hydrants, supplied by the works of the Contra Costa Water Co., and five cisterns. The estimated value of the Department property, December, 1873, is \$30,000.

Officers.—Fire Commissioners, Q. A. Chase (President), Walter Smith, G. S. Brown, John Gieschen, Hiram Thorne, George Chase, W. K. Rowell, and C. W. Freeman; Secretary, Abraham Heyman (salary, \$180 per annum); Chief Engineer, J. F. Steen (salary, \$500 per annum); Assistant Engineers, R. E. Harmon and William Myles; Fire Wardens, J. F. Steen, R. E. Harmon, William Myles, and Perry Johnson.

PHENIX STEAM ENGINE Co., No. 1.—Location, City Hall grounds. Apparatus, an Amoskeag third-class engine. Organized in 1869,

Three powerful Fire Insurance Companies operating conjointly in California; BABER & ROFF, Agents, Oakland.