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"BIKINI" AID FIRE-FIGHTERS

A new idea to aid fire-fighters makes its debut at Dorking. Known as the "Bikini", it consists of an inflatable raft, similar to those used by Air Sea Rescue Craft. Mr. Shirling, engineering inspector of the Home Office fire services department, invented the Bikini which can be used in shallow water or even in mud. Fast work by the firemen soon gets the hoses run out to take the water from the pumps on the raft to portable reservoirs.

Although the raft has been designed primarily for use in war-time to help fight large-scale incendiary raids, it will be in service next year. Experts say that the Bikini would have been invaluable during the 1940 raids on London when there was a shortage of water owing to exceptionally low-tides. Portable pumps will send the river water up to the reservoir on the bridge. But this isn't their only use - a jet of water from one of them gives the raft its propulsion.

Now the hoses are made ready for fixing to the Bikini's pumps. While this is being done other firemen are completing the portable plastic reservoirs - or "dams", as they call them. From these the water will be re-pumped through the fire-fighters' hoses. A total of a thousand gallons a minute is supplied by the Bikini, the latest weapon to aid the constant fight against fire.