

284901

SCIENCE V. FIRE,

60/91.

Sunday traffic was jammed for several hours by a gas flame, roaring ten feet and more into the air, at the junction of the North Circular and Golders Green Roads. The gas main was leaking. Restarting the engine of a baby car stalled over a manhole, ignited the gas. There was a reek of gas everywhere. Before they were taken to hospital, the lives of some men were saved by artificial respiration. Fortunately the danger of the fire spreading was averted by water hosed around pneumatic drills to prevent sparking. It was twenty hours before the 150 families evacuated near the blaze were allowed to return.

Only the day before, new premises of the Fire Research station were opened by Lord Hailsham. To what extent draught spreads fire, and how it can be prevented from doing the worst, is one of the things studied here. They investigate the innumerable causes of fire...That explosion, in the gas carrying ducts of a supposed chemical plant can be made harmless by putting caps on the ducts. They blow off and remove the pressure; Now how to put out petrol fires by foam; testing here the quantity of foam required.

Into the exhaust of a turbojet engine, water is injected, to reduce the oxygen in the exhaust. Nitrogen, carbon dioxide and water vapour make up the rest. This is the fires where smoke keeps firemen away from the heart of the blaze. In buildings, too, much can be done to prevent fire, should it break out. Walls and floors must stay fire resistant for one hour, and proper escape routes provided. Lord Hailsham watched the demonstration. Last year fires cost Britain 700 lives and £44m.