

Aldermen Refuse Firemen Shorter Hours, Extra Pay

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Funds are not now available either to shorten Atlanta firemen's workweek or raise their pay, the aldermanic finance committee decided Friday.

The action came after some 400 firemen, their wives and supporters had overflowed the aldermanic chambers at a public hearing. They asked that the fire department's workweek be cut to 56 hours from the present 60 hours and that time and a half be paid for all hours over 40.

The finance committee took up the requests in executive session and wound up deciding that neither could be granted immediately without raising

By MARION GAINES
taxes or the city's finding some new source of revenue.

The aldermen made two concessions, however, by adopting resolutions promising that:

(1) Time and a half will henceforth be paid for fireman called back to duty in emergency situations after completing their regular 60-hour week. It was estimated this will cost only some \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year.

(2) The 56-hour week for firemen will be given "The first consideration" in drawing up next year's city budget over any requests for across-the-

board salary raises in any departments.

All members of the finance committee stressed that they were in sympathy with the firemen's objectives. But all agreed, too, with Ald. Charlie Leftwich that the current city budget "is as tight as it's ever been."

Comptroller Charles Davis told the committee that implementing the 56-hour week would require about 72 additional firemen at an annual cost (based on top pay scale) of some \$526,052.

Paying time and a half over

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Firemen Lose Request for Fewer Hours

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40 hours for a 56-hour week would cost about \$704,618 a year and for a 60-hour week about \$810,831 a year, Davis said.

At the public hearing, Capt. J. C. Whitley told the aldermen that the city was practicing "false economy" to train young men as firefighters and then lose them a short time later to jobs with shorter hours and weekends and holidays off.

Sgt. J. D. Garrett pleaded for implementation of the firemen's requests, declaring: "We can't strike against you; all we can do is quit and look for something else."

Longtime Atlanta businessman Sam Rothberg urged the aldermen to give the firemen a wage "that is just, fair and right" even if it meant increasing taxes.

Insuranceman M. M. (Mugsy) Smith said an important factor is "the life hazard—when these men answer a fire call, they never know if they'll come back."