

FOREST FIRES SET, POLICE CONVINCED

Rhode Island Authorities Ask Check on New Yorker Who Bought Candles in Area

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Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., May 3—
With at least three forest fires still burning, although the worst was believed definitely over, Rhode Island State police recorded today for the first time their conviction that the outbreaks, which have spread damage in a sixty-square-mile area since Thursday, were incendiary.

In a message to police in New York, the Rhode Island State police unit at Hope Valley, in the township of Richmond, requested a checkup on a New York motorist known to have made purchases of candles in the fire area.

"We have had several very bad forest fires of an incendiary nature," the message read, "and we wondered if there might be any possible connection between the candles purchases and the fires."

The message included the candle-buyer's automobile plate number and his description. One detail was that he had "bad front teeth."

Although reports of incendiarism and even of sabotage—with government-stored lumber in the area as the target—were common during early stages of the fires, these reports had dwindled yester-

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day when it became apparent that continued hot, dry weather made new fires a constant threat.

The State police memorandum was the first clear indication that the investigation of the fire, in which the FBI is participating, will proceed on the virtual assumption that the fires were set. Richmond township is just south of the main fire area.

Governor J. Howard McGrath, who asserted last night that the fire situation in general was under control, made another tour of the six townships which are still wholly or in part under martial law tonight. A spokesman said

that while the situation had unquestionably improved, all of the State's emergency forces were being held on the alert pending the end of the dangerously dry weather.

"While this weather prevails, sporadic fires are likely," he said.

With exhausted members of the State Guard and the various fire-fighting units having a relatively easy day, Red Cross units which from the first had been at the scene, continued to help in every way possible.

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