

Adelaide Fire Brigade 1855

Fire in Peel Street, Adelaide

Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Tuesday 6 February 1855, page 3

ALARMING FIRE.

At 10 o'clock last night the inhabitants of this City were alarmed by the cry of "Fire, Fire," which the ringing of the fire-bell confirmed. Our reporter immediately proceeded to the scene of conflagration, and ascertained that the store of Abraham Abrahams was on fire. Immediately after the alarm was given, the detachment of the 40th, quartered in Adelaide, turned out, and rendered, under the energetic superintendence of Mr Superintendent Tolmer, most efficient service.

On the arrival of the men it was generally rumoured and believed that a quantity of gunpowder was stored, in the counting-house of Messrs Doutty and Co., whose premises are situated next door but one to the store where the fire broke out. A report like this naturally created a strong desire on the part of Captain Tolmer to remove so serious a source of apprehension. Under his direction, the stores of Messrs Doutty and Co. were broken open, and the whole of the supposed combustible matter removed with railroad speed by the men of the 40th, whose unremitting gallant exertions are worthy of the highest praise.

Within half-an-hour from the commencement of the fire, the store was one mass of flame, and a demand for water was heard in every direction.

It is to be regretted that at least half-an hour of most valuable time was lost in consequence of Messrs Pybus and Turner refusing to supply, at their own cost, water to keep down and extinguish the fury of the fiery element. The reason assigned for the adoption of this line of conduct was that, on the occasion of the recent fire in Waymouth-street, the works of Messrs Pybus and Turner were solely instrumental in supplying the water which extinguished the fire; and for this supply no compensation has yet been made.

At half-past 11 o'clock the conflagration reached its height—the buildings were covered with a dense dome of smoke, above which, ever and anon, the irresistible flames shot in a manner which imparted a terrific grandeur to the scene.

Shortly afterwards the illuminated windows of Messrs Kelsey and Church's premises proclaimed that the fire had reached the adjoining store, and threatened the surrounding buildings. At this time the supply of water was most efficient, and began to tell very considerably. Under the direction of Mr Carvasso, the active superintendent of the Imperial Fire Insurance Company, the engine belonging to that establishment was taken to the back of the burning building, and aided most materially in subduing the fire.

Captain Tolmer, Mr Barlow, jun., accompanied by mounted-police constables Jolliffe, Beazley, and Hamilton, at the risk of their lives, ascended a ladder to the roof, amidst the raging of the flames, the playing of water from the engines, and the cheering of the assembled crowd of spectators, of whom there were not fewer than three thousand. With the hose of the police engine, combined with that of the Imperial Company present, these gallant fellows contributed in no slight degree to keep down the fire.

Great credit is also due to the persons who managed the engine of the Cornwall Insurance Company. The fire was eventually got under about 1 o'clock this morning.

Immediately adjoining the stores of Messrs Doutty, Heward, & Co. were a group of lath and plaster out buildings, with shingled roofs, which were promptly re-moved, almost at the commencement of the fire.

During different periods of the evening serious apprehensions were entertained that the roof of Mr Abraham's store would fall in, but, contrary to expectation, it stood the test of the fire in a manner which successfully demonstrated the superiority of galvanised iron roofs, as adapted for stores, over all other kinds of roofing.

The owners of the adjoining premises were unquestionably indebted to the strong party walls for the salvation of their property.

We understand that the premises and stock of Abraham Abrahams were fully insured in the Alliance. The estimated damage caused by the fire is between £5000 and £6000.

In closing this necessarily hurried notice, we must not omit mentioning the promptitude with which Messrs Pybus and Turner supplied upwards of 150 loads of water immediately they received a guarantee from the Insurance Companies, and the skilful and energetic way in which it was applied by the conductors and men who worked the various engines.

A gentleman who witnessed the exertions of the detachment of the 40th regiment, appreciated their efforts so highly, that he handed £2 to our reporter, which he expressed a hope would form the nucleus of a subscription in their behalf.

The origin of the fire remains to be ascertained.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Tuesday 6 February 1855, page 3

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE.— Soon after 10 o'clock last night the alarm of fire and a visible commencement of the work of destruction attracted some thousands of inhabitants from all parts of the city to the scene of conflagration, at which they found the military, the police, and the fire brigade had already repaired with their accustomed zeal and alacrity. The fire had broken out in the store of Mr. A. Abrahams, Peel-street, Currie-street, the southern side of a block of three warehouses known as the Commercial Buildings, erected by Mr. Harris ; the middle warehouse being that of Messrs. Kelsey & Church, and the one on the northern ; side occupied by Messrs. Doutty, Heward, and Co. The police fire-engine was first on the ground, but was soon followed by two others; it was some time, however, before a sufficient supply of water could be obtained. At length the water-carriers began to arrive in rapid succession, and the quantity delivered by them was considerably augmented through the untiring activity of those who brought water in fire-buckets and such other vessels as were readily obtainable. The military composing our little garrison were all there, and their bugle notes, sounded at intervals, assisted in the concentration of their active, steady, and truly efficient services. It soon became evident that the destruction of Mr. Abrahams's store, with its valuable contents, could not be prevented, and the most energetic measures were resorted to by the police, under the orders of Mr. Tolmer, with a view to prevent the spread of a conflagration, which at one time seemed to threaten the most extensive devastation. At about 11 o'clock it was deemed necessary to ply the engines against and into the store of Messrs. Kelsey & Church. The fire was thus kept in check, but it is feared that the damage caused to their merchandise by water will be found very considerable. It was generally

reported that all the parties were more or less insured. The engines were the Police, the Imperial and Royal, and the Cornwall. The agents of the Imperial and Royal Insurance Companies were on the ground and engaged in active superintendence. It was past 1 o'clock this morning before the fire appeared to have been quite subdued, but soon after the engines ceased to play, and quiet was partially restored to Currie-street, Hindley-street, and their neighbourhood, though we doubt not that many a watchful eye was kept upon the smoking embers and the valuables which had been snatched from what at one time seemed inevitable destruction. The cause of the accident can only be surmised, but any further information or particulars that may transpire will be found in our next publication.

THE LATE FIRE IN PEEL-STREET. — The Agents of the Imperial, Royal, Alliance, and Cornwall Insurance Companies give notice, that all CLAIMS which have not been already lodged for services rendered, and water supplied, at the above fire, must be lodged at the office of the undersigned before the 14th instant, after which day no claims will be received, and all such claims as are approved will be paid on Saturday, the 18th inst., between the hours of 12 and 3, at the office of the Cornwall Insurance Company.

A. SCOTT, Agent.

Cornwall Insurance Office, Adelaide,
9th February, 1855. dl*1

Advertisement in the Adelaide Times Sat 10 Feb 1855 Page 3

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Saturday 10 February 1855, page 3

VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REGISTER.

Sir — While actively employed in the late fire in Peel street, I was forcibly reminded of the great benefit that would accrue to Adelaide generally and individually, in cases of fire, from the organization of a Volunteer Fire Brigade on the same system that is so generally and effectually carried out in most towns in Germany, where I belonged to a brigade for three years, and had many opportunities of judging of its efficacy. The same system is also, I believe, pretty generally adopted in America ; and why should it not be adopted in South Australia, where wood enters so largely into the materials employed in every building, and where stores of the most combustible nature are so intimately inter-mixed among private dwellings. That the want of an efficiently organized and responsible body of men, voluntarily devoted to the duty, must be vividly impressed upon the mind of every inhabitant of Adelaide, does not admit of a doubt. The following is a sketch of an efficient volunteer fire brigade :— The brigade to consist of not less than 50 enginemen, with officers ; 12 hosemen ; 12 ladder, or firemen, with officers ; 50 supernumeraries, with officers ; one or two drummers, and a surgeon.

THE MEN to receive no pay, to find their own dress, to choose their own officers according to their efficiency, and to be subject to a fine for non-attendance, unless in case of sickness, &c. To be exercised once a-month.

THE DRESS to consist of coarse blue flannel or serge trousers, a blue Guernsey, black leather belt, a wicker-work close cap, covered with red cloth on the top, with blue cloth band, black leather peak fore and aft, the cap to be marked in white with the department each man

SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit
www.fire-brigade.asn.au
10 April 2026

belongs to. The officers of each department to be distinguished by white shoulder knots, and to have a very shrill whistle attached to a chain round the neck. The Corporation or townspeople to provide a large and powerful engine, with hose and all necessary fittings, also engine-house, a man to clean and keep everything in serviceable order, horses, &c. ; not less than 50 fire-buckets, 1 extension ladder, 24 hatchets, 24 pieces of light strong rope, each about 20 feet, with an iron hook at one end, firehooks, crowbars, &c. ; also, 50 constables' staves. To find refreshments to the men when needed ; to bear the medical expenses, and give fair remuneration for all wounds acquired in ser-vice, and bear all the expenses of the establishment.

THE DUTY.

The engine and all other implements to be kept in order by a man, and in an engine-house provided by the Corporation in as central a position as possible ; two of the brigade to sit up in turns every night from 8 p.m. till 4 a.m. in the engine-house, and not to leave it on any account. They must keep everything in order for instant use and in case of alarm the one must see to getting the horses in, and the other has to call the drummer or drum-mers, who shall proceed to play a reveillee through every principal street, upon which all the brigade must repair in proper dress to the engine-house, and after the roll call proceed in marching order (each with his tools) to the scene of fire. The enginemen shall solely attend to pumping the engine. The hosemen, each with a rope and hook wound round his waist and a hatchet in his belt, shall attend solely to the hose. The firemen or laddermen, each with his rope, hook, and hatchet, shall attend solely to the ladder, and to saving persons and valuable property in danger. The bucketmen shall form a double line to the nearest pump, well, cistern, or other supply of water, and as there are two men to each bucket, one line shall pass up the full buckets and the other pass down the empty ones. The supernumeraries to be provided with staves to guard all property exposed in the streets, remove furniture, use the fire-hooks, supply the place of absentees, and make themselves generally useful. All persons, on perusal of the above, must see the efficiency of such a corp under such regulations ; and if any of the enterprising and spirited gentlemen of Adelaide will come forward and assist me we will call a preliminary public meeting for the im-mediate organization of such a brigade. They will receive the most cordial co-operation from

Your obedient servant, G. GEORGE, Dentist, Gawler-place,

Who begs to tender himself as the first volunteer. February 9, 1855.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Saturday 10 February 1855, page 2

THE PREVENTION OF FIRE.

We publish, in another column, a letter on the subject of a Volunteer Fire Brigade. The idea thus broached and developed by our correspondent appears to us well worthy of attention. There is no fear of persons refusing to enlist in such a corps as this, where the drill would not be quite so irksome as that required to fit us for meeting the Russians, and where the chances of usefulness are so far superior. Experience proves that at every fire, persons can be found in sufficient numbers to render every requisite aid ; but the chief difficulty consists in the want of system. Where there is neither plan nor authority, the very amount of effective force becomes a hindrance ; and men who might have been trained to render invaluable help, only stand in the way of one another. There is no casualty at which persons of all ranks in life more freely lend their services than in the extinguishing of fires, in proof of

which we may recal to memory that Prince Albert himself formed one of the double chain of "bucket-men" who passed water from hand to hand at a recent fire in England. We have not the slightest doubt of the entire success of some such scheme as that now proposed, if the matter were taken up with becoming spirit. Some modifications would probably have to be made in the plan so ably developed by our correspondent. We think that to parade the streets in musical procession, in order to rouse the volunteer brigade, would prove not only a sacrifice of precious time, but a sure means of collecting an unmanageable rabble from every part of the city. When the men were enrolled it would be easy to divide the city into districts, and to appoint an officer to each district, whose duty it should be to summon the force to the post of duty. But we forbear to criticise a scheme which must be affirmed in its broad principle before details can be settled. One thing, however, is perfectly clear, namely, that the extinction of a fire, the rescue of property, the saving of life — all mainly depend upon prompt, adequate, and well trained assistance. With good engines, plenty of water, and a thoroughly-trained brigade, there would be very little fear of extended conflagrations. At all events the interests at stake merit the effort recommended.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Tuesday 20 February 1855, page 3

INQUEST ON THE FIRE IN PEEL-STREET.

Mr. Stevenson held an inquest on Monday, at the Local Court, for the purpose of enquiring into the origin and cause of the fire of the 5th inst., by which the warehouse and merchandise of Mr. Abraham Abrahams were destroyed. The following gentlemen were sworn as Jurors:— Messrs. Hector (foreman), Colley, J. Waterhouse, Ayres, Faulding, Paxton, Green, C. Cleve, Linklater, Dale, Brunskill, A. Cumming, Nathan, N. Blyth. The Coroner informed the Jury that the doubts, which had arisen as to the power of a coroner in this colony to conduct investigations like the present had been entirely cleared up by the express insertion of such an authority in the 8th clause of the Act No. 14 of the late session of Council. Inquests would in future be held by himself, or by the country coroners, in all cases of fire where any suspicion existed, and where application was made to them for that purpose; for it must be understood that it was no part of a coroner's business to put himself forward upon such occasions, though it was his duty to institute an enquiry when requested to do so. He had referred to this subject in order to account for the delay which had arisen, as in the present case application had been made to him by letter dated 9th February. He had to consult the law officers of the Crown as to his power to comply with the request; but, in future, any similar enquiry would be conducted with promptitude, as upon that would depend much of its beneficial effect.

The Coroner and Jury then went to Peel-street to examine the premises. They present a miserable appearance, the heavy timbers and the flooring being nearly burnt away, and the entire place scattered with the remnants of ruined goods of every sort and kind. On their return to the Court, the Coroner preceded to take evidence. Abraham Abrahams, merchant, having been sworn, The Coroner remarked that he thought it better not to put any questions to the witness, but to receive from turn any statement he might wish to make. Mr. Abrahams said he had no statement to make but would be happy to answer any questions. In reply to the Coroner's interrogations, he then deposed as follows:— He was in business in Adelaide as a dealer in general merchandise and occupied on lease the premises where the late fire occurred. He left the store about five minutes after 5 o'clock on the evening of the fire, which he locked up himself, and, as was usual, left the key at Mr. Church's, who lived in

the neighbourhood. There was no fireplace in the store. He lighted a cigar with a lucifer just as he was leaving the store. As he stood upon the steps he threw the remains of the lucifer into the street. It was not then in a blaze. He did not deal in lucifers, and had none in the store at that time, except about five boxes, which he kept in the office for his own use. He could give no explanation as to the cause of the fire, he declined answering the question as to whether he had any account of the goods which were in the store when the fire occurred. He was partly insured; but declined to say for how much. He was insured in the Cornwall and Alliance Offices. Had a lad as an assistant in the store named Daniel Adcock, who lived on the Port-road. Engaged him without any previous recommendation. He was about 10 years of age. Never saw him smoke. He was at the store on the day of the fire, and left just before witness in the evening. Had only part of a pound cannister of gun-powder in the store, which he kept for private use. He was first informed of the fire by Mr. Colley, whom he met when returning from Brighton to Adelaide. Was not aware that any person but himself smoked in the store on the day of the fire. The goods in the store were not generally of a very combustible nature. A quantity of goods had been removed from the store since the fire occurred. Mr. Abrahams then stated that he had not declined to answer the questions having reference to the insurances, to obstruct a full enquiry as to the origin of the fire. On the contrary, he was anxious for the fullest investigation. But the enquiry was the first of the kind which had occurred, and the questions appeared to him to be not only unconnected with the investigation, but such as would be prejudicial to the Insurance Companies; still, if the Jury wished it he would answer them. The Coroner replied that he considered the questions as being quite relevant to the subject of enquiry. Mr. Abrahams, by answering them, would be doing that which would tend to clear his own character from all suspicion, but his declining to answer them would be of no avail, as the replies would be elicited from others during the day. Examination continued. — By Mr. Colley — The goods which were removed after the fire were very much burnt and damaged. Some of them were, however, in tolerably good preservation. The latter, were near the door, at the north-west corner of the store, and extending along the northern side. They extended the whole length of the cellar, some more or less damaged. By Mr. Hector— Resided at Brighton at the time of the fire. Had been there since November, and had never slept in town except one night since the fire. By the Coroner— Had no stock-book. Did not keep a store-book. Some of the account-books were destroyed by the fire, and all the invoices. Some of the books remained. Had an iron safe, and the books that were in it were saved. The files of invoices were always hung upon hooks, round the office. Could not positively say what books were destroyed. The most important one was the invoice-book, with the original invoices. It was too large to go into the safe. The ledger was saved. Part of the invoices, but not the whole, were posted into it. The in-voice-book was probably either on the desk or on the table; it was in the office. All the office furniture was destroyed, excepting the iron safe and chest. The office was near the door. The day-book was saved. Alexander Tolmer, Inspector of Police, proved his signature to the report made by him, the day after the fire, to the Commissioner of Police. George Henry Fox, agent for South Australia to the Alliance (London) Fire and Life Insurance Company— Knew Mr. Abrahams, who had effected insurances upon his stock and building. He insured the building for £100 on the 20th October last, in his own name, jointly with that of Mr. Harris, the owner; and the general stock and merchandise for £1,000, on the 19th December last. Was aware that the store and goods were burnt on the 5th instant. Some correspondence had passed on the subject. Mr. Abrahams had made a claim for the full amount, but it had not yet been allowed and paid. One reason was that Mr. Abrahams had

not furnished sufficient accounts; another was that witness had the option of deferring the settlement for three months. Had not had any previous losses in the colony. Every effort was made to save the property. Joined the other offices in the expense of the engines which were used on the occasion. There was very great difficulty in procuring water. Did not think the whole of the water carts were full at the time. Pybus and Turner, who have water-works near the river, refused at first to supply water; they stated that they should be guaranteed a certain sum first. The fire at that time was going on. Believed the damage was increased by the delay of half an hour thus occasioned. The Company's Surveyor, examined the buildings before the insurance was effected. He did not examine the goods or ascertain their value. It is not usual to do so. Mr. Abrahams gave notice of his being insured in other offices. He made no explanation of the origin of the fire. Had asked him, but he knew nothing about it. Knew perfectly well that he was out of town at the time of the fire, and was under the supposition that he knew nothing about it. He had furnished no written statement as to the probable origin of the fire. Abraham Scott, agent for South Australia to the Cornwall Fire and Life and Marine Assurance Company — Mr. Abrahams had been insured for £1,700 upon merchandise for several months. The policy was current when the fire happened. The goods were formerly in another store, but the policy was transferred on their removal to Peel-street. He had claimed for the full amount. Had not paid the money, as Mr. Abrahams had not at present got his accounts made up. Was aware of his being also insured in the Alliance Office. He had given no account of the origin or cause of the fire. - Mr. Pybus refused at first to supply water, and had stated that he would do the same on any future occasion unless £5 were first guaranteed to him. Had asked Mr. Abrahams for an explanation of the cause of the fire, and he said he had no idea how it happened. He said he knew nothing of it till Mr. Colley told him the next morning coming up from Brighton. Mr. Pybus held the site of the water works upon the Parks Lands under the Corporation. By Mr. Abrahams— Believed the original policy was for £2,000, and that £1,700 of it was transferred some months ago to Peel-street. The whole of the goods were at first in Solomon's warehouse, but after the transfer only £300 worth remained there. Had promised to pay double price for all water supplied, in cases of fire. The Insurance Offices were willing to bear all charges, though not half the property in the town was insured. William Clisby, farmer, near Melbourne, at present residing in Pirie-street, was in Peel-street at a quarter past 10 p.m. on Monday, the 7th February, and saw Mr. Abrahams' store on fire. Was attracted to the spot by the cry of "Fire" Not more than three persons were then present. Should not know them again. The fire was coming from the cellar. Looked through the holes in the steps and saw a sheet of flame. It could hardly have been close to the door or he must have felt the heat. It was the brightness of the glare which had attracted him to the holes in the cellar steps. Could not see for the smoke what goods were burning. The flame must have been at least two or three yards further inside than the steps. Went round to Mr. Cain's house immediately adjoining. No one there seemed aware of the fire. Was not present when the warehouse door was broken open. Should imagine from what he saw that the fire originated in the cellar. There was no smell that witness perceived. Saw no signs of fire in the upper part of the buildings. Martin Weber, night watchman— Saw smoke coming from the roof of the store at about a quarter past 10. Was in Leigh-street at the time. Ran round into Peel-street and gave the alarm. Went near the store, and saw a little smoke coming out from under the steps near the front door. Saw no fire at that time. Looked at the fan-light over the door, but saw no fire. Noticed about ten minutes afterwards a light from the lantern in the roof. Was there when the door was broken open, and saw thick flames and smoke gushing out. That was

about ten minutes after his arrival. Could see nothing in the store but flames and smoke. No other person was present when witness first arrived. Mr. Abrahams here desired to mention that the removal and sale of the salvage by Messrs. Solomon, were with the written permission and recommendation of Mr. Scott and Mr. Fox. Robert Tassie, clerk to Messrs. Kelsey & Church, merchants, Peel-street, occupying the next store to that destroyed, deposed that Mr. Abrahams generally brought in the keys of his store when he left for the night. On the night of the fire his boy brought them in at 10 minutes or quarter past 5 o'clock. Hung them on a nail in the counting-house. About five minutes afterwards, witness shut up their own store, locked it, and took away the key. Had charge of it always. It was impossible for any one to have touched Mr. Abraham's keys in the meantime. They could not have been obtained but by the breaking open of the door. Saw them next in the morning lying on the floor, under the nail. The store of Messrs, Kelsey & Church had been broken open, and many, of the goods had been removed. Lived on South terrace, but repaired to Peel-street as soon as he heard of the fire, and found Messrs. Kelsey & Church's store broken open. Mr. Abrahams' boy generally brought in the keys. He made no particular remark on that occasion. The key witness had of Messrs. Kelsey & Church's store was the only one. It was not out of his hands that night. W. T. Sabben, Town Clerk of the City of Adelaide, deposed that the terms, if any, under which Messrs. Pybus & Turner held the water-works must have been made with the Government. The Corporation only exerted its influence to obtain permission for them to construct water-works there. The Coroner said they must have the evidence of the boy who left the keys, and he would also give notice to the Government to produce the terms with Messrs. Pybus and Turner. He therefore adjourned the inquest to 10 o'clock on Tuesday at the same place, and the Jurors were bound over to attend.

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ADVERTISEMENTS, 14th MARCH, 1855.

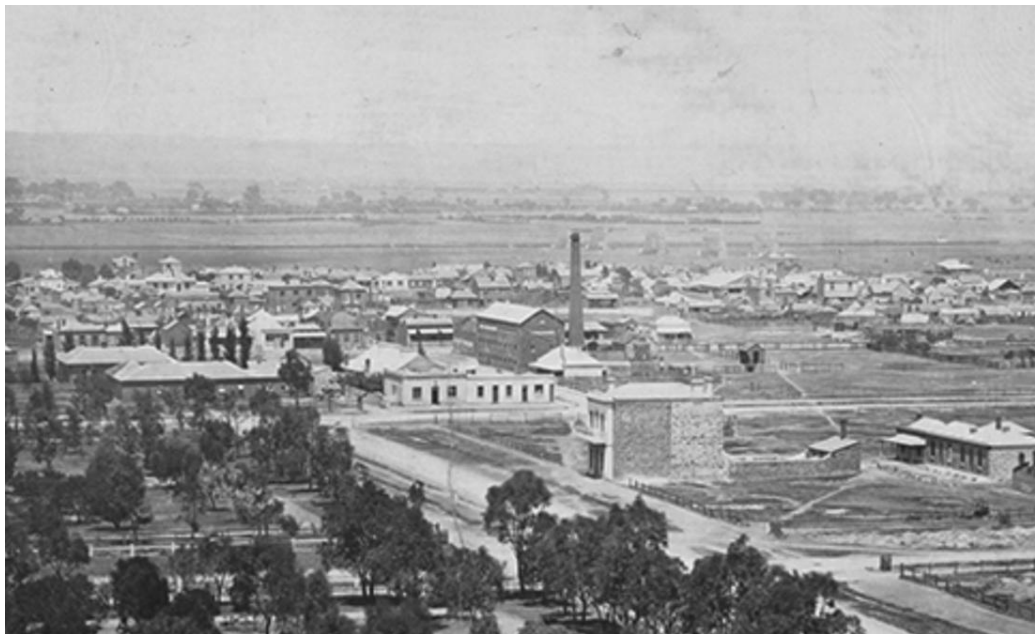
R OYAL FIRE AND LIFE INSURANCE COM-
PANY.
CAPITAL—TWO MILLIONS STERLING.
Engine-House :—Carvosso and Barlow, Hindmarsh
square.
Medical Referee :—W. H. Sholl, Esq., M.R.C.S.
In the Fire department the rates are the same as
charged by the other English Offices here—and in the
Life Branch, the Premiums are those shown by the
Company's English scale.
Full particulars can be furnished on application to
ACRAMAN, COOKE, & CO., Agents,
Currie-street.

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CORNWALL FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY, LAUNCESTON.
CAPITAL £100,000. ESTABLISHED 1841.
DIRECTORS :
R. DeLittle C. N. Campell
Richard Green W. S. Button
 Thomas Corbett.
SECRETARY—James Aikenhead.
Sub-Agents for receipt of Fire and Marine Proposals,
John Newman, Cleland, Page, and Co., Port Adelaide ;
 W. B. Lucas, Kapunda.
Francis Robert Hart, Hahndorf and Mount Barker
 District.
For Fire and Marine rates, &c., apply at the office of
ABRAHAM SCOTT, Agent, Blyth-street.
Those insured in this Office against Fire are reminded
that Annual Policies expire by 1st January, 1st April,
1st July, 1st October.
The Company's engine is kept at Mr J. G. Coull's
Foundry, Blyth street, where a number of men are
always ready, night or day, to render assistance, whe-
ther the property endangered be insured or not. tths*

Adelaide Times Sat 7 Apr 1855 Page 3

Tuesday 17th April 1885 – Fire at Paxtons' Mill (Adelaide Steam Flour Mill), Mill Street, Adelaide.





Adelaide Steam Flour Mill 1870 Duryea-1 – State Library of South Australia - View of Adelaide looking south [B 16004/6]

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Thursday 19 April 1855, page 3

Volunteers at the Fire, — During the late fire at the steam-mill near the Supreme Court, some 20 or 30 of the Volunteer Artillerymen of both companies turned out under Captain Dodgson and Sergeant Hunt, and worked the Imperial fire-engine in a most indefatigable manner. It is possible that something like a fire brigade might be formed among the resident volunteers, whose habits of obedience and discipline would ensure their acting in concert. They certainly proved themselves very effective men on Tuesday.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 21 April 1855, page 3

ALARMING AND DESTRUCTIVE FIRE.

At about 3 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon symptoms of internal conflagration in the Adelaide Steam Flour Mill were discerned from the observatory on the lofty premises of Messrs. Waterhouse, in King William-street, and about the same time stronger evidences of impending calamity were seen by Mr. Hills, cabinetmaker, from his workshop near Victoria-square. Mr. Hills not only repaired instantly to the scene of disaster, but influenced a prompt supply of water and other effective assistance, and exerted himself amongst the foremost of those who distinguished themselves by their promptitude and efficiency. The police fire-engine was the first to arrive, at about 25 minutes to 4, and was shortly followed by the Cornwall and the Imperial; but it soon became manifest that the large and valuable building was doomed to destruction—the roof being on fire through-out, and thus assisting, by increased ventilation, the progress of the devouring element below. The roof and the three upper storeys were destroyed with astonishing rapidity, together with the stock, the grist, and the internal machinery; and it was with much difficulty that the warehouse on the south side, and the cottages on the north, were rescued from destruction, through the noble and persevering exertions of the military, the police, and the citizens, by whom the organized efforts were generously seconded. The size and elevation of the mill are sufficient to render it a conspicuous object, and distinctly visible from the Racecourse ; but when the roof, which resembled a section of the sea-shore with billows of liquid fire, presented itself to the gaze

of the multitude, it was not surprising that even the most eager patrons of the turf hastened from the scene of enjoyment to that of disaster. Mr. Crawford and Mr. Jenkins were the first who arrived from the Course on horseback; but they were soon followed by other horsemen, by numerous vehicles, and crowds of pedestrians. In the meantime unceasing exertions were made by the military under their officers, the police under Inspector Hamilton, the self-constituted fire-brigade under the guidance of Mr. Carvosso, Barlow, jun., and others, and by numerous civilians under a voluntary organization of their own which did them much honour. About a hundred bags of bran or meal were saved with difficulty; but the machinery, the lessee's stock, and the grist, were entirely consumed. The cause of this calamity has been clearly ascertained About 3 o'clock one of the men, who were busily employed at the mill, be-came alarmed by a strong smell of combustion, and being attracted thereby to the smutting-machine found that ignition had commenced, and on opening the wood casing by which the machinery was enclosed, in his anxiety to ascertain the cause of combustion, flames burst forth and ascended with such rapidity that in spite of the efforts of himself and fellow-workmen, the fell destroyer found access to the woodwork of the building, and the element of destruction was irrepressible. The steam was up, and it was more than once suggested that a jet of steam directed to the interior might do wonders, but it was soon evident that the suggestion, valuable as it might have been under other circumstances, was too late in the lamentable instance now recorded. The destruction of the main building was complete, and of all the property contained in it scarcely anything was saved. The substantial brick walls, the engine, and other unflammable substances, are all that now remain of a large and productive property. The insurances in the Imperial were— on the mill-building, £1,500; machinery, £1,000; lessee's stock, £2,000; on the store appertaining to the mill-building, £500. We are sorry to learn that the insurance effected on account of Mr. Paxton, £3,000, is £2,000 less than sufficient to cover that gentleman from loss; that the lessee will be a sufferer to a considerable extent, besides along interruption to the progress of his large business; and that the grist of several customers, consumed upon the premises, will make them participators in the large aggregate loss occasioned by this sudden and peculiarly unfortunate occurrence. No life was lost; but, by the falling of a shed, several persons were severely hurt. One man was literally scalped, it is said, and the most serious result was only obviated by the prompt attendance and skilful treatment of Dr. Fraukis and Mr. Gunson, whose professional services were never more effectively rendered. For the information of distant readers, we may mention that the Adelaide Mill, built by Mr. Slatter, had been purchased and improved by Mr. Paxton, that the lessee is Mr. Mortlock, and the owners of grist on the premises, Mr. Barry, Mr. Monteith, and others. It was observed that firehooks were brought and used, but in consequence of the great intensity of the heat, it was scarcely possible to come near enough to the building to use such means, however applicable they may have been found in some instances. Never were the efforts of men more energetically employed than upon this lamentable occasion when many of the water-carriers were observed advancing with their loads at a sharp trot, and those employed at and about the engines manifested a courage and devotedness beyond all praise. The Police engine was hurried to the spot by members of the force without waiting for horses, and nothing could surpass the zeal, order, and unanimity displayed.

Alarm of Fire.—About 5 o'clock Wednesday afternoon a report made at the Police Office, and some alarming symptoms on the spot, caused a considerable concourse in the vicinity of the stores of Messrs. Binney Brothers, situate at the rear of the Bank of Australasia. The Superintendent of Police was there, as also Inspector Hutton, and so prompt had been the

measures taken that the military were almost instantaneously ready to co-operate with the Police and the civilians. The causes of alarm eventually subsided, but it is understood that some cases containing merchandise of a combustible nature have been voluntarily left in charge of the Police with a view to deliberate examination and report. The Police engine was allowed to remain near the premises, and the representatives of the several Fire Insurance Offices have used every possible precaution, but we believe there is no immediate apprehension of danger as affecting the premises.



Art Gallery of South Australia - James Shaw, Fire at the Adelaide Steam Flour Mill, Mill Street Adelaide 17 Apr 1855

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Wednesday 25 April 1855, page 3

CORONER'S INQUESTS.

ENQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF THE RECENT FIRES.

The Coroner attended on Tuesday morning at the Local Court House, when the following list of gentlemen who were summoned as Jurors were called :— Thomas Elder, P. Levi, P. J. Beck, J. M. Linklator, J. Waterhouse, A. Hay, A. Thomson, J. Carruthers, E. W. B. Glandfield, G. Green, P. Cumming, H. Noltenius, G. Bartlet, R. B. Colley, H. K. Hughes, William Parrinton, William Hunter, Edward Cook, James Cook, and J. Kudall. Considerable delay occurred in assembling the Jury. The following gentlemen were fined £1 each for late attendance: — Messrs. Bartlet, Levi, and Beck. Messrs. J. Rudall, H. K. Hughes, R. B. Colley, J. Carruthers, and E. B. Glandfield, were fined £2 each for non-attendance. Mr. P. Cumming was chosen foreman. The Coroner stated that he had after some consideration come to the determination to hold inquests on all occasions when premises or property were destroyed by fire. By that course facts necessary to be known would be arrived at, and the suspicions which must necessarily be excited by only occasional enquiries into the origin of fires would be avoided. He had resolved to hold inquests on a late fire and a late alarm of fire, not that

he knew of any suspicious circumstances in connection with them ; but that having made up his mind to the proper course, he would carry it out.

Fire at the Adelaide Steam-Mill.

The Coroner and Jury then proceeded to inspect the ruins of the Adelaide Steam-mill. On their return, Peter Johnson, miller, was called. He stated that he had been employed at the Adelaide Steam-mill, and remembered its taking fire on that day week. The fire originated at the foot of the smutting-machine. He (witness) had charge of the mill at the time, and acted both as miller and engineer. The smutting-machine was in the second storey of the building, and there was no fire near it. There was an upright spindle running in a brass step which got hot. There was a quantity of dust lying on the brass step, which was new, having been fixed that morning. It had been working about four hours when the fire was discovered. Such new brasses required more than ordinary attention, and he had looked, as was usual in all cases (for old brass might get hot as well as new) at it several times that day. He attributed the fire to the heating of the brass step. There was only the dust at the foot of the smutter ignited when he discovered the fire. He immediately stopped the smutting-machine, gave an alarm, and ran for water. There were three men working in the mill at the time. On procuring water from the tank, witness opened the door of the smutting-machine, but found the flame bursting out so fiercely that neither himself or the other men could approach it. He then ran for the Police, but their engine did not arrive for half-an-hour. When it came only the north end of the building was on fire. There was water there before the Police engine arrived. There were other engines on the spot shortly after, but the fire was too fierce to be suppressed. He (witness) had examined the brass step after it had been at work about an hour, and finding it hot, he put some suet on it, and told one of the men to mind and oil it. It was that man who first discovered the fire. It was not usual in England to have the smutting-machines detached from the mills, but he had seen it so in this colony. By the Foreman— The dust from the smutting-machine had been cleared away that morning. Dirty wheat would cause an accumulation of dust that would require more frequent clearing than if the wheat had been cleanly threshed. By the Coroner— The spindle of the smutting-machine went at the rate of 500 revolutions per minute. David Meyrick, miller, employed lately at the Adelaide Steam-mill, stated that he was there on the 17th April. He had to look after the smutting-machine, but had other duties to attend to. He was instructed by the first witness to oil the brass step of the smutting machine, and did so several times. He had oiled it ten minutes or so before the fire was discovered ; the step was then hot, but it did not burn his finger when he touched it. He reported that fact to the last witness, who desired him to keep putting grease on it. Johnson did not then go up and examine the step, nor did he (witness) return to it for about ten minutes. They then went altogether to it, and found the smoke coming out. He (witness) understood by the words "keep putting grease on it," to mean doing so every quarter of an hour. W. R. Mortlock stated that he was lessee of the late Adelaide Steam-mill, which was the property of Mr. Paxton. The two last witnesses were in his employment ; they were very sober men, and selected by him from a larger establishment. He (witness) considered the man Johnson the fittest person in South Australia to have the management of a steam-mill. There was a comparatively slight stock in the mill. The property belonging to witness was worth about £3,000. He was insured for that property to the extent of about £2,000 in the Imperial. The property referred to consisted of grain, flour, bran, and implements of the trade. He (witness) was on the premises a few minutes after the alarm of fire was given, and a short time before that had

gone all over the mill. The fire-engines arrived very late ; but if they had been there earlier they would have been of but little service, as the fire gained so rapidly on the building that nothing could save it. When the engines arrived there was great confusion ; no one appeared to have the direction of them. There were seven or eight water-carts on the ground when the first engine arrived. By a Juror (Mr. Young)— There were but three men employed by witness at the mill. The former witnesses, recalled, declared that there had been no tobacco-smoking in the mill on the day of the fire. The Jury found that the Adelaide Steam-mills were accidentally destroyed by fire on Tuesday, 17th April last ; and that the evidence produced to the Jury shows that the fire was occasioned by the over-heating of a certain portion of the machinery of the smutting apparatus. The Jury agreed to go on without adjournment, and enquire into the cause of the

FIRE AT BINNEY'S STORE, GILBERT-PLACE.

Mr. James Cooke stated that he was agent for the Company in whose office the premises were insured, and as such might be considered interested in the enquiry. On that explanation the Coroner relieved Mr. Cooke from attendance. The Jury having inspected the premises, and the partially burnt cases which had been removed to the stores of Acraman Cooke, & Co., Agents of the Insurance Company, returned to the Court House, when the Coroner called Richard Henry Binney, senior partner in the firm of Binney Brothers, merchants, Adelaide, who stated that he remembered a fire having taken place in their store on Wednesday, the 18th April. It was about a quarter before 5 o'clock in the evening. A case of beer and a case of pickles were discovered burning; they were the cases now in the possession of Acraman and Co., and which the Jury had seen. There was a fire-place in the store, but no fire had been lighted that day. There had been no smoking of tobacco-pipes or cigars, nor had anybody been using lucifer matches in the store that day to witness's knowledge. The store had been closed that day at 12 o'clock; it was again opened about half-past 2 o'clock by witness, who was accompanied by J. S. Duncan, of the Reedbeds, who had made some purchases from witness. Neither witness nor Mr. Duncan were smoking or had a light. On their going out, witness closed and locked the door. About a quarter before 5 o'clock, when witness was leaving his office to go home, he went into the yard, and saw smoke coming out of the grating. Witness went back to his office, and told Mr. Tont and others there that there was a fire in the store. They went at once and opened the store door. Witness perceived that the place was full of smoke, and went into King William-street calling out fire; but returned immediately with a pail of water, with which he saw a woman washing the floor of Green's Exchange. He handed in the bucket of water to the people in the store, who very soon put out the fire. There was no other damage done by the fire, but the injury to the two cases which the Jury had seen, one of which contained pickles, the other bottled beer. He (witness) could give no idea as to how thy fire originated. There were goods to the value of £800 or £900 in the store. They were mostly in packages. Amongst the rest there were three cases of lucifer matches. There was some wheat and also barley in bags. The lucifers were on the opposite side of the store, and nearly but not quite fronting the cases that were discovered on fire. He could form no conjecture as to how the fire originated. He was insured for £500. Had been insured in the Royal Insurance Office for about four months. He had no other policy on the goods in that store. The insurance was not at all equal to the value of the goods in the store. He had never seen his brother smoke in the store. By a Juror (Mr. Young)— The cases that were found burning were, he believed, old packages. By another Juror (Mr. Noltenius)— Had seen no persons smoking in the store that

day. The policy of insurance would have expired in August next. George William Binney, a partner in the firm, stated that he had not been in the store in question after 10 o'clock on the morning of the fire, nor was he on the premises when the fire occurred. He was in the habit of smoking, but never did smoke in the store. They had two storemen on the 18th, and an assistant. Witness never saw the head storeman smoking in the store, although he occasionally saw him smoking after the store was locked up for the night. The cases partially burnt were the most unlikely of any goods in the store to burn, and would have extinguished themselves. He could not account for the fire, but a great many drays had been at the store that day, as they were removing to another store, and he could not answer for what the drivers might have done. He (witness) knew nothing about the fire at all. Robert M'Minn, clerk to Messrs. Smith and Cullen, stated that he was standing at the office door, when he heard Mr. Binney give the alarm of fire. He dispatched a messenger for the Police engine. Went to the store, and assisted to remove the burning cases, but knew nothing of the origin of the fire. George Meredith, clerk to Binney Brothers, stated that he was in the store from 9 o'clock in the morning until the fire was discovered; he meant that he was in the office, but had been in the store about twenty times during the day. The men asked for a half holiday to go to the Races. That was about half-past 1. In the evening Mr. Binney came in, saying, "Good God, the stores are on fire!" He was consulting with Mr. Montefiore what to do about opening the door. He (witness) went and unlocked the door, and with Mr. Tont put out the fire in five minutes. The store was quite safe when he locked it, but Mr. R. H. Binney opened it afterwards, and went in with Mr. Duncan. Every person who came to the store smoked; all the merchants in town smoked; they all went about with cigars in their mouths. (A laugh.) He could only suggest, by way of accounting for the fire, that some person had lighted his pipe or cigar, and incautiously threw the match down in the store. The Coroner, with great patience, endeavoured to get coherent answers from this witness, but he rattled on in a most flippant and self-contradictory manner, until ordered out of the witness-box. The Coroner summed up in a few words— In this case, gentlemen, there is no evidence of the origin of the fire, although it is a reasonable conjecture that some person having lighted a pipe or cigar, most improperly threw down a match in the store. From the fact of the fire having been discovered by Mr. Binney, and from the prompt alarm he gave on seeing smoke issue from the store, there could be no grounds for throwing any imputation upon him. The Jury found that there was no evidence to show the cause, or to account for the fire. During the proceedings Mr. Alderman Glandfield came into Court, and it was shortly after understood that he explained to the Coroner that members of the City Council were, by the Municipal Act, not only exempt, but disqualified from serving as Jurors.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Friday 1 June 1855, page 2

Proposed Assistant Fire Brigade. —Mr. Wright, the agent, of the Imperial Fire Assurance Company (acting for that office as well as for the agents to the Royal and Alliance Companies), has requested Sergeant Hunt, of the Artillery, to undertake the formation of an assistant fire brigade, to consist of 40 men from the two Artillery Companies. It is proposed that the brigade shall be placed under Sergeant Hunt's charge, who will act under the direction of the superintendent of the engine. We understand the pay to be offered will be a nominal amount of £2 a-year to secure the services of the men, together with the same allowance as is given to the regular fire brigade in case of being called out. They will be furnished with a distinctive cap or a badge for the arm. The only service required for the fixed pay will be attendance for two or three hours twice a-year for the purpose of

exercising the engine. The trumpeter belonging to No. 2 Company has already volunteered to join the brigade, and will be ready to sound the assembly upon the first alarm of fire. We believe the subject will be mentioned on parade today.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 2 June 1855, page 8

The Fire Brigade.—We have received from "One of the Brigade" the following extract from a letter, dated May 4, 1855, addressed by the Secretary of the Cornwall Insurance Company to the Adelaide agency:—"Sir—I am instructed by the Directors to convey to you their high gratification at the prompt, vigorous, and sustained exertions of the brigade on the occasion of the fire at Paxton's mill, as stated in your letter. Although the Company was not interested in this fire, the Directors have not the less pleasure in recording this expression of their approbation." We understand that the letter closed with a sentence expressive of the Cornwall Company's liberality.

Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Tuesday 17 July 1855, page 3

DISASTROUS FIRE.

About 8 o'clock last night the city was thrown into commotion by the loud ringing of the fire alarm bell. The cause was soon apparent, for almost immediately the sky, from one end of the city to the other, was lit up as brightly as if it were noon day, showing by the intensity of the blaze, as it appeared more and more vivid in the direction of the middle of Rundle-street, that a frightful conflagration had broken out in that neighbourhood. It was soon discovered that a fire had originated in the workshop of our old and respected fellow-colonist Mr Debney, the cabinet maker, and that there was little chance of the building, which was situate at the back of his residence, being saved from total destruction. Everything, however, that could be done to preserve the property was attempted. Two engines were soon on the spot, and a supply of water was, considering the bungling means of providing it, speedily obtained. The soldiery and the police were, as usual, most active in their exertions ; but so combustible was the building and its contents, that all effort to do more than prevent the flames from spreading to the neighbouring premises was fruitless. So great indeed was the rapidity with which the conflagration spread, that within half-an-hour the slight boardings of which the building was composed had fallen in, and the blaze which had shot up with so much fury died away as rapidly as it had previously spread abroad ; there was, we understand, consequently but little opportunity for saving any of the valuable materials which the workshop contained. We were informed, however, that the building was insured. The origin of the calamity appears to be lost in surmise, but it is supposed that the workmen on leaving their work left some embers burning in the fireplace, and that the shavings lying about the floor became accidentally ignited by a spark. We were not able to learn, up to a late hour, what amount of property was consumed ; the fear is that it was very considerable. The excitement occasioned at the moment of the accident was heightened by a pelting shower of rain, which poured down with great violence almost directly the fire commenced, and continued to do so until it was extinguished ; fire and water were thus hissing against each other as if the elements were at war.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Tuesday 17 July 1855, page 2

Destructive Fire in Rundle-Street. —

On Monday evening, about a quarter-past 8 o'clock, a fire broke out in the workshop of Mr. George Robert Debney, cabinet-maker, Rundle-street, which the men, who have been working long hours for the completion of the Council Chamber furniture, had just left. The building being entirely of wood, the fire spread with fearful rapidity, the whole in a very few minutes presenting one blazing mass, and the flames extending themselves to several wooden outhouses around. The Imperial, Alliance, and Royal engine, in charge of Mr. Carvosso, arrived very speedily, and drew up in a little alley at the back of Mr. Thompson's yard, but had to wait some time for water. Mr. Pappin, with the Cornwall engine, came next, and in a few minutes more the Police engine, both of which took their stations in Mr. Debney's yard. Mean-while, the Soldiers of the 40th Regiment, under Colonel Moore, and a number of Horse and Foot Policemen, under Superintendent Tolmer and Inspectors Hamilton and Reid, rendered essential service in tearing down the fences and sheds, and removing a large number of crates and cases by means of which the flames were likely to have extended themselves. Buckets of water were also handed to the roof of Mr. Thompson's warehouse, and their contents dashed upon the shingles below. The rain began at the same time to fall heavily, to which circumstance, and the utter absence of wind, the eventual safety of the surrounding buildings may be attributed. One of the most active men upon the ground was His Excellency the Governor, who, with his athletic form enveloped in a rough pea jacket, did an evening's work of which a fireman might have been proud. When the water-carts arrived, the stream from the Imperial engine was directed from the roof of Mr. Thompson's warehouse on to the backs of the houses in Rundle-street and the other buildings which appeared in imminent danger, and shortly all three engines played upon the burning mass. The fire, however, raged so fiercely that its fury was exhausted in little more than half an hour, the workshop and stable being the only buildings consumed. The horses were promptly removed, but unfortunately an immense quantity of valuable cabinet work was destroyed, including the carved English oak for the new Council Chambers, which was nearly ready for removal, some of it having been already French polished. The building and its contents were insured, we understand, in the Cornwall Office, but we are sorry to learn that the tools belonging to 16 workmen were entirely destroyed, and those, it may be feared, were un-protected by the policy. There is no doubt that for some time Mr. Thompson's warehouse was in great danger, and the cottages in the little alley at the back of his yard were given up by their inmates for lost. They removed their furniture and bedding in the utmost dismay, and will probably sustain some injury from its hasty handling and the heavy fall of rain. Sergeant Hunt and a few of his brigade of Volunteer Artillerymen were on the spot, and rendered individual assistance; but not being organized at present, they could not be said to act in concert. Mr. Debney had left town, as usual, at 5 o'clock, for his residence at Burnside ; but his foreman, Mr. Holland, who had not quitted the yard more than 10 minutes when the fire broke out, returned immediately, and did all that was possible to aid the arrangements of the police and firemen. The alarm was first raised, we understand, by Mr. G. H. Styles, of Unley, who caused Mr. Coull's fire bell to be rung, and almost at the same time the bell sounded from the Post-Office. In awarding credit to those who rendered efficient assistance, we would particularly mention Mr. Thomas Hills, cabinet-maker, who evinced great zeal, coolness, and judgment in directing the removal ; of such inflammable articles as were most likely to be mischievous. It is the opinion of Mr. Carvosso that it was mainly owing to Mr. Hills's judicious exertions that the adjacent cabinet workshop of Mr. Gibbs escaped demolition. The supply of water, though eventually ample, was much retarded by the bad state of the approach to the Ford. This should be looked to by

the Corporation, as the road, though now used for little else than the drawing of water, becomes highly important on the occasion of a fire. The agents for the various Companies were all upon the ground, namely, Mr. Scott, of the Cornwall; Mr. A. J. Wright, of the Imperial; Mr. Acraman, of the Royal; and a gentleman, whose name we did not learn, on behalf of the Alliance; as also Mr. E. W. Wright, the Surveyor to the various Companies. The fire was entirely extinguished by 10 o'clock but the Cornwall engine and brigade, together with several policemen, remained in the yard for the night. We most not conclude this notice without mentioning that we heard a hope very generally expressed that some-thing would be done for the poor fellows who have lost their tools, particularly as some of them, who are new arrivals, are at present wholly dependent on their daily labour.

Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Friday 20 July 1855, page 2

DOMESTIC NEWS.

Proposed Assistant Fire Brigade.—Some time since a proposition was made by Mr Wright, agent to the Imperial Fire Assurance Company (also acting for the agents of the Royal, and Alliance Companies), for raising an assistant Fire Brigade, to consist of forty men, from the two companies of volunteer artillerymen. Sergeant Hunt, of the Artillery, was requested to undertake the formation of the brigade, and it was, when formed, to have been placed under his charge; the whole to be under the direction of the superintendent of the engines. The pay to have been offered was nominally £2 per year, with the same amount as that allowed to the regular fire brigade when called out; the only service required for the fixed pay being an attendance for a few hours twice during the year, for the purpose of practice or drill in working the engines. The assistant brigade were to be furnished with a distinctive cap or badge of some kind or other, most probably worn on the arm. Unfortunately the proposition was not carried into effect; and until the present moment we have been without the organised assistance to the regular brigade, which is so highly desirable in case of sudden emergency. But the suggestion has again been offered on the part of the Insurance Companies mentioned above, and, as will be seen by an advertisement in another column, Mr Carvosso (of the firm of Carvosso and Barlow, carriage builders,) has been requested to take the steps necessary for enrolling men and forming the brigade. . We believe it is his intention to receive applications from any respectable person, whether in the volunteer force or not, and the regulations will be otherwise similar to those before proposed.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Friday 20 July 1855, page 3

ADDITIONAL FIRE BRIGADE.— The agents of the Imperial, Alliance and Royal Fire Insurance Companies having instructed Mr. Carvosso to form an additional Fire Brigade of 40 men, offers of service are invited by advertisement, and it is hoped that a sufficient number of eligible persons will respond to the call, and offer themselves to Mr. Carvosso, the Superintendent of the present Fire Brigade, for immediate enrolment. When the brigade is formed, and a good system of organization carried out, the assistance given in case of fire will be prompt and effective; all unfounded claims and much confusion will be obviated, and injudicious steps prevented, inasmuch as it will no longer be necessary to have recourse to promiscuous, ineffective, and irregular aid. We have to add that Mr. Carvosso's offer of his valuable services having been accepted by the South Australian Mutual Fire Insurance Company, the patent fire-annihilators belonging to that Company have been committed to his charge, and will in future accompany the engine to be employed under Mr. Carvosso's superintendence

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 21 July 1855, page 8

CORONER'S INQUEST ON THE LATE FIRE.

On Thursday. Mr. Stevenson held an inquest at the York Hotel, Rundle-street, to enquire into the origin of the fire which occurred on Monday evening, on the pre-mises of Mr. G. R. Debney, cabinetmaker. A highly respectable Jury was sworn, of which Mr. James Cooke was chosen foreman. The Coroner, accompanied by the Jury proceeded to view the premises, and on their return to the Court-room, the following evidence was taken:

George Robert Debney deposed—I am a cabinetmaker, carrying on business in Rundle-street. The fire which took place on Monday night destroyed my workshop and every material in it. The material destroyed and injured in consequence may be valued at from £1,000 to £1,500 including the buildings. I was insured for the building, and the timber in the yard and workshop, for £100. I employed from 20 to 25 men. Latterly they worked in the evening by candlelight. I understood they were at work in the shop on the evening of the fire. The candles were in open candlesticks: not in lanterns. It is not customary to work with lights in lanterns. I believe the men could not work otherwise than with candles as they did. I consider my men particularly steady and sober. My foreman (Holland) was in charge. I have always insisted upon the greatest care being taken to prevent fire. I believe every practicable precaution was taken.

Charles Whitehair Holland deposed—I am foreman to Mr. Debney and have been so for nearly three and a half years. I was in the workshop on Monday night, when the men were at work. About three weeks or a month ago it was necessary, from the pressure of business, that the men should work at night until 8 o'clock. They worked by candlelight. The candles were in candlesticks, not protected in any way. I had the management of the workshop, and it was my duty to see that the lights were taken care of. The men have been repeatedly cautioned by me to be careful. The men are very steady, and no smoking was allowed on the premises. There were six candles lighted and burning at the same time. There are no snuffers in the shop, and the men some times snuffed the candles with a chisel, and sometimes with their lingers, placing the snuff in the candlestick. There was no fire in the grate. There were a few shavings on the floor. The men left on Monday night about five minutes after 8 o'clock. I saw the men out, and secured the shop in the usual manner. I made sure that there was no fire. When the men were gone, I walked through the shop with a lighted candle. I am confident the accident did not happen from my candle, as I have been extra-careful lately of fire. I had been in the house about 20 minutes when the alarm was given. My residence is close to the workshop. I am certain the fire commenced in the workshop, as I saw the light first inside. I was the first that saw the fire. The men were all on the best terms with myself and Mr. Debney. The only conjecture I can form as to the origin of the fire is, that some one of the men had accidentally dropped a candle snuff on the floor, which subsequently caused the fire.

The Coroner asked the Jury if they required the evidence of any of the persons who were in Mr. Debney's workshop on the evening of the fire? Mr. Cooke and several of the Jury thought that the evidence already given was sufficient for the purposes of the enquiry; and, after a short commentary by the Coroner on the evidence, the Jury returned a verdict, "That the fire was accidental, by misadventure, and not otherwise."

Mr. Abraham Scott, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Acraman were present on behalf of the Insurance Companies they represented.

Mr. J. F. Ross and Mr. Grierson were each fined in the sum of 40s. for non-attendance; and Mr. W. Jaffray was fined 20s. The fine in the latter case was modified by the Coroner, in consequence of the representation of the summoning officer, who stated that he had told Mr. Jaffray the Coroner would possibly receive one of his shopmen in place of his personal attendance. The Coroner desired it to be publicly understood that he would not receive any such substitutions.

Additional Fire Brigade.—The agenda of the Imperial, Alliance, and Royal Fire Insurance Com-pany having instructed Mr. Carvosso to form an additional Fire Brigade of 40 men, offers of service are invited by advertisement, and it is hoped that a sufficient number of eligible persons will respond to the call, and offer themselves to Mr. Carvosso, the Superintendent or the present Fire Brigade, for immediate enrolment. When the brigade is formed, and a good system of organization carried out, the assistance given in case of fire will be prompt and effective; as unfounded claims and much confusion will be obviated, and injudicious steps prevented, inasmuch as it will no longer be necessary to have re-course to promiscuous, ineffective, and irregular aid. We have to add that Mr. Carvosso's offer of his valuable services having been accepted by the South Australian Mutual Fire Insurance Company the patent fire-annihilators belonging to that Company have been committed to his charge, and will in future accompany the engine

Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Monday 30 July 1855, page 2

DOMESTIC NEWS.

The newly-formed Assistant Fire Brigade. — On Saturday afternoon Mr Carvosso assembled his new company of firemen at the Old Ford, for the purpose of an experimental trial of their power and adaptability. About twenty-eight able-bodied active persons manned the engines, and displayed in a very satisfactory manner positive proof that in a case of emergency the brigade would prove of very great assistance to the firemen already employed by the Company. The rules of the new force were read and explained by Mr Carvosso, who in the course of his observations stated, as we understood, that the companies he represented on that occasion were desirous to give every fair and reasonable encouragement and remuneration. He further stated that up to the present time the Insurance Companies had paid the police and soldiers for the assistance rendered by them; but with the organisation of the new brigade this practice would be discontinued.

Adelaide Times Mon 30 Jul 1855 Page 4

**ALLIANCE BRITISH AND FOREIGN LIFE
AND FIRE ASSURANCE COMPANY.**
(Established by Act of Parliament, 1824.)
Capital, £5,000,600.

PRESIDENT.

Sir Moses Montefiore, Bart, F.R.S.

DIRECTORS :

James Alexander, Esq. William Gladstone, Esq.
Charles Geo. Barnett, Esq. Samuel Gurney, Esq., M.P.
Geo. Henry Barnett, Esq. James Helme, Esq.
Charles Buxton, Esq., M.P. John Irving, Esq.
Sir George Carroll Sampson Lucas, Esq.
Benjamin Cohen, Esq. Elliot MacNaughten, Esq.
James Fletcher, Esq. Thomas Masterman, Esq.
Charles Gibbes, Esq. J. Mayer Montefiore, Esq.
Sir A. N. De Rothschild, Bart. Oswald Smith, Esq.
Baron L. N. De Rothschild, Thos. Charles Smith, Esq.
M.P.

The undersigned having been appointed Agents for the above Company, are prepared to undertake risks in both Life and Fire departments at current rates in the colony.

Losses by fire paid at this branch.

Prospectuses can be had on application to the undersigned.

HENRIQUES & CO., Agents, Currie-stret.
Adelaide, October 5, 1859. fmw2

Adelaide Times Mon 30 Jul 1855 Page 4 – Alliance

**CORNWALL FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE
COMPANY, LAUNCESTON.**

James Aikenhead, Esq., Secretary.

**SUB-AGENTS FOR RECEIPT OF FIRE AND MARINE
PROPOSALS.**

John Newman; Cleland, Page & Co. Port.

W. B. Lucas, Kapunda.

S. Drew & Co., Koorunga.

Goode & Allen, Goolwa

William Gray, Port Onkaparinga and the Neighbourhood.

Frank Wilkinson, Gawler Town.

Percival Warburton, Angaston.

ENGINEERS—Pappin & Jones, Blyth-street.

Annual Fire Policies expire 1st January, 1st April, 1st July, 1st October.

ABRAHAM SCOTT, Agent for South Australia.

Adelaide Times Mon 30 Jul 1855 Page 4 – Cornwall

IMPERIAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY (Instituted 1803), 1, Old Broad-street, and 16, Pall Mall London. Subscribed and Invested Capital, One Million Six Hundred Thousand Pounds.

Insurance on MILLS effected at current rates.

Insurances effected on Vessels and Cargoes in Harbour.

All Claims are settled in Adelaide on proof of loss.

A. J. WRIGHT, Agent.

Exchange Chambers, King William-street, Adelaide,
Engine-house, Hindmarsh-square.

Adelaide Times Mon 30 Jul 1855 Page 4 – Imperial

Insurance Companies.

ROYAL FIRE AND LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
Capital, Two Millions Sterling.

FIRE BRANCH.—The Agents continue to grant Insurances at moderate rates, and are duly empowered to settle claims for losses in the colony.

IN THE LIFE DEPARTMENT the Rates of Premium are the same as those charged by the office in England, the large amount of bonus (2 per cent. per annum) awarded to holders of life policies last year, forming an inducement to persons to insure their lives with this Company, equalled by few, if any, of the other English Life Offices.

SUB-AGENTS.

PORT ADLAIDE.—R. and R. ain.

GAWLER.—Jefferson P. Stow

KAPUNDA.—John Small.

MEDICAL REFEREE.—W. H. Sholl, Esq., M.R.C.S.

ENGINE HOUSE, at Messrs. Barlow & Son's, Hin
marsh-square.

For further information, apply to

ACRAMAN, MAIN, LINDSAY, & CO., Agents.

July 10, 1858.;

Adelaide Times Mon 30 Jul 1855 Page 4 - Royal

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Friday 3 August 1855, page 3

NECESSITY OF A BUILDING ACT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REGISTER.

Sir — In a recent number of your paper I saw a well-written article on the necessity of a Building Act. It is a subject that has long been in the minds of most of us who have houses and property in this city, and one I am sure that every person is bound to forward to the utmost of his ability. The late fires have, indeed, roused the fears of all living in or near the principal thoroughfares ; and when we reflect on the frightful ruin occasioned, a few years back, by fire at San Francisco, it behoves us to take every precaution, lest such an event take place at our own doors. That an effective Fire Brigade should be immediately formed is imperative, but other means should also be adopted to prevent such a calamity. It is quite true that so inflammable an article as the wooden shingle should be prohibited for roofing in the city. The colony produces excellent slates ; and within two miles of town, I understand, there is a manufactory lately established for roofing and other tiles— a most desirable addition to our building material, and one that should tend to stay the communication of fire from roof to roof, besides protecting the inhabitants from the extreme heat of our summer sun.

I am, Sir, &c., A SUFFERER BY FIRE. Adelaide, August 3, 1855.

Adelaide Observer Sat 4 Aug 1855 page 2

DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP.—
We the undersigned, trading under the Firm of
CARVOSSO & BARLOW, Coachbuilders, Hindmarsh-
square, Adelaide, do hereby give notice that we have
this day **DISSOLVED PARTNERSHIP** by mutual
consent.

SAMUEL CARVOSSO.
THOMAS BARLOW.

Witness—**J. G. COLLIS.**
Adelaide, 24th July, 1855.

THE BUSINESS will in future be carried
on by Messrs. **THOMAS BARLOW & SONS**, to
whom all outstanding Debts are to be paid, and who will
also defray the Liabilities of the firm incurred up to the
present date.

Adelaide, 24th July, 1855. 212'4v

THE COACH MANUFACTORY,
HINDMARSH-SQUARE.

T. BARLOW & SONS having become sole proprietors
of the business recently carried on under the firm of
Carvosso & Barlow, take this opportunity of informing
the public that T. Barlow has had upwards of 30 years'
practical experience in England as a Coachbuilder and
Springmaker, previous to his residence of nearly three
years in this city, and that his Sons were also brought up
to the trade. They are, therefore, enabled to manufac-
ture any description of vehicle suited to the requirements
of the colony. All orders entrusted to T. Barlow & Sons
will be executed with well-seasoned material and good
workmanship, as well as a due regard to style and dura-
bility. In short, every article made in the Hindmarsh-
square Coach Manufactory will be warranted.

The Manufacturers would call attention to their pre-
sent very excellent and well-selected stock of imported
Carriages, Gigs, Dog-carts, Phaetons, &c., by the first
English makers.

Repairs punctually attended to, and charges moderate.
The Trade supplied with Lancewood and Ash Shafts,
Coach Lace, Brass Caps for Patent Axles, &c., &c.

212acv

Adelaide Observer Sat 4 Aug 1855 page 2

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 18 August 1855, page 5

Fire.—At about a quarter to 10 o'clock last night Mr. Uren, of Rundle-street, noticed a strong smell of burning substances. he had just retired to rest, but feeling, from the nature of the odour, that some unusual combustion was adjacent, aroused himself, and looked over his premises. On going out at the rear of his house, he perceived that a fire was raging in the adjoining business premises of Mr. Turner, draper. Mr. Urea immediately gave the alarm, and, accompanied by Mr. George James, of the Norfolk Arms, rushed to the spot where the fire was noticed. Fortunately they found the back entrance to Mr. Turner's shop merely fastened by a latch. They at once entered, and found the ceiling, which was of calico, and the goods in various parts of the shop on fire. They set seriously to work in isolating the burning masses, and extinguishing them by pressure and the application of such water as they found at hand. In the meantime, Thomas Glover, barman at the Norfolk, and two other persons named William Pickford and George Reynolds, tore down the shutters in front, and brought effective aid in a supply of water from the opposite side of the street, where fortunately Mr. Smith had six casks full. By dint of great exertion, in which Mr. George James particularly distinguished himself, the neighbours got the fire effectually under before the arrival of either engines or water-carts, although both were on the spot with highly commendable alacrity. The Cornwall engine first arrived, and it was rapidly followed by the Police and Imperial engines. There was, however, we are happy to state, no occasion for their exertions, and scarcely any necessity for the numerous water-carts that promptly

tendered their supplies. The origin of the fire, when we write, can only be surmised, and the extent of the damage is not yet ascertained. The fact of the ceiling being of calico would account for the fire appearing in several places to those who first entered, as the flames would rapidly extend along that light and inflammable material, while the ignited fragments falling would set on fire all equally inflammable matters with which they came in contact. On the arrival of the police in force, they took possession of the premises, and, having completely extinguished the fire, left a sufficient guard to protect the property.

Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Tuesday 21 August 1855, page 2

INQUEST ON FIRE IN RUNDLE-STREET.

The Coroner, G. Stevenson, Esq., held an inquest on Monday morning, at the Norfolk Arms, as to the circumstances originating the fire on the premises of Mr Turner, draper, in Rundle-street, which occurred on the night of the 17th instant. The following gentlemen composed the jury :—Thomas Hudson Beare, Robert Frew, Thomas Monteith, Charles Edward Stevenson, Robert Henry Grierson, Charles George Everard, William Bruce, John Francis Ross, John Thomas Church, Matthew Lodge, George Alston, George Brunskill, Edward John Cooke, and Tom Cox Bray.

The Jury having selected Dr Everard as their foreman, were sworn, and then, under the Coroner' direction, proceeded to view the premises.

On their return the Coroner examined Edward Angaston Phillips, surgeon-dentist, Rundle-street, who deposed that he resided in the house adjoining Mr Turner's premises. On Friday evening, about ten minutes to 10 o'clock, he heard a strange cracking kind of noise, and smelt a smell of fire. He went into the yard of Mr Turner, and felt his way to the back door of the store (it not being then light). The door opened on trying the latch. It was not locked, and he found the room full of smoke, with flames apparently in several places. He shut the door immediately, and on an alarm being given by Mrs Uren, he returned to the yard with Mr Uren (witness's landlord). Mr Uren and witness obtained water in buckets, and both of them continued from that time throwing water on the flames. Presently other persons came, and the fire was eventually got under.

By the Coroner—When he first opened the door the fire appeared to be in four or five different places, detached from each other, and on both sides of the store.

By Mr Grierson—The canvas ceiling was not then ignited.

By Mr Ross—The fire appeared to be most violent and most intense near the desk at the back of the shop.

By the Coroner—The greatest distance of parts of the store alight from each other might be about six feet; but the shop was so full of smoke that he did not notice whether the ceiling was alight or not.

By Mr Ross—Had not seen either Mr Turner or his assistants since the occurrence of the fire.

William Uren, shoemaker, Rundle-street, deposed that he resided next door to the premises where the accident occurred. Believed Mr Turner's premises belonged to the South Australian Company. On Friday evening, shortly before 10 o'clock, he was reading a newspaper in bed, and his attention was aroused by a very strong smell of fire. He found

that Turner's place was on fire, and saw the smoke issuing through the roof. Ran to the front door, and knocked at Mr Turner's shutters. Found there was no person there ; and went again to the back accompanied by Mr James, of the Norfolk Arms. Witness entered the store, and saw the goods on fire in and about the various places, detached and extending in separate spots as far as ten feet into the store. Did not observe whether the canvas ceiling was on fire. The fire was burning freely on the shelves at the back of the store. The yard at the back was enclosed; no means of ingress from or egress to the street except by the front door. Previously to leaving his room, witness heard what he thought was a gust of wind accompanied by a creaking of the roof. He thought it was merely the indication of a heavy shower coming; since that time he conjectured it must have been the burning of the ceiling.

By Mr Lodge—It might have been about five minutes between the time of the hearing that noise and the alarm being given.

George Hamilton, Senior Inspector of the Metropolitan Police, deposed that on arriving at the scene of the conflagration he found the front door of the store open, and several persons engaged in extinguishing the fire. There were the remains of the fire in detached places on the shelves. After the fire was extinguished he examined the store, and tracing the flames to the extreme back of the shop, he found that at a kind of desk in the left hand corner, where some pigeon-holes were filled with paper, one of the upper pigeon holes was burnt right through the top, and the papers in it completely destroyed. There was room for a wax taper in that pigeon-hole, but not for a candle. He found in another pigeon-hole a box of lucifer matches upset, and about a dozen matches lying out of the box. They were lying on a piece of paper ; had taken fire, but the paper was not burnt, only stained ; and that particular pigeon-hole was less burnt than any other portion of the woodwork about there. He also examined the desk carefully, but could find no trace of a candle having been left there. There were some goods by the side of the pigeon-holes which had apparently carried the flames to the ceiling. He considered that the reason of the fire being found in detached places was that portion of the lighted canvas from the ceiling had fallen and communicated the flame. He could form no other opinion as to the cause of the fire, except that it could not have originated from the lucifer matches I have referred to.

By Mr Maine—Could not offer any opinion as to why the papers in one pigeon-hole should be burnt completely, and the other papers only partly burnt.

By Mr Ross—Did not think there were any candles near the premises.

By Mr Turner—The pigeon-hole containing the papers was more burnt on the upper surface than under.

The Coroner said many of the Jury were of a different opinion, and therefore Mr Hamilton would be good enough again to examine it. Mr Hamilton returned, and stated that, on re-examination, he agreed with the Jury.

George James, landlord of the Norfolk Arms, opposite Mr Turner's store, corroborated Mr Uren's evidence. He saw the fire in a dozen detached places ; the canvas ceiling must have been burned before he arrived on the spot. He staid until the fire was entirely extinguished. The store was usually closed about eight or nine o'clock; it was lighted by three camphine lamps.

Andrew Loutit, clerk to Mr Linklater, deposed that coming up Rundle-street at a quarter to ten o'clock on Friday evening, he smelt fire, and saw a large body of smoke in the street. He could not tell where it came from at first. Eventually traced it to Mr Turner's premises, but could not see through the keyhole or between the shutters into the store. At that time there was no light coming from the roof, only smoke. Witness subsequently broke open the shutters with the assistance of another person named Glover. Entering the store he found a flame on the right hand two or three feet from the door. It was among some rolls of goods which looked like stair-carpeting. The roll was burning with a kind of smouldering fire, no bright flame.

By Mr Turner—The fire appeared to have come from the ceiling, but at the back of the store it was difficult to say which way the fire burned.

Samuel Carvosso, Superintendent of the Assistant Fire Brigade, deposed that he entered the store, and saw fire in several parts, and also along the ridge piece of the roof. After the fire he found in a shed outside of the back door, a small parcel of candles, and having lighted one he examined the desk. He confirmed Mr Hamilton's evidence as far as it went. In addition, on the left hand side of the desk entering from the back door, he found a camphine tin lying on its side with the cork out. There was a small quantity of camphine in it, and he laid it down again. He remained there till a quarter to twelve o'clock ; the fire broke out again half way along the shop just before he went. Did not observe a trace of smoking or any pipes.

Mr Hutton, Inspector of Police, said that he found a small meerschaum pipe in the shed at the back of the store.

An adjournment for an hour having taken place, the enquiry was resumed, Richard Turner being examined, stated that he was a draper in Rundle-street, occupying the premises where the fire occurred on the previous Friday evening. He resided at Magill, and received intimation of the fire at half-past twelve in the night, by means of a person sent out to him. He came into town as fast as he could ride. He left the store at nine o'clock with two others, a carpenter, and a boy named George Lewis, leaving no one inside. Believed that he (witness) was the last to leave the store, locking the front door, and giving the boy the key. There was also another door, at the back, which was, to the best of his belief, fastened, having enquired to that effect of the boy, who stated that it was. The door was fastened as a rule ; witness did not see for himself that it was fastened. The latch was a little defective, and might mislead one ; but he believed he himself fastened it that evening. There was a light burning in the store on Friday night as usual; it was the second hanging-lamp, near the centre of the store. That was the lamp generally left burning, as he would never allow a candle to be lighted for the boys to go to bed. They always slept on the premises.

One of them was his apprentice-boy, and the other witness's brother-in-law, a youth named William Teague. They were generally allowed to go out of the store after business was over, to return about 10 or 11 o'clock. The lamp was left burning partly for protection. The carpenter was employed in repairing the shutters, using a light while working, and the light attended by the boy. Was at the desk on Friday night, for a few minutes, between 8 and half-past, having a lighted candle with him. Never smoked in the shop, nor ever allowed a person to smoke there. The roof of the store was of iron, and the ceiling of calico. There were no curtains to cover the goods in the shelves, after business was over. Witness was

insured, but respectfully submitted that that question and also the amount had nothing to do with the enquiry.

The Coroner said it had to do with it most materially, and if he declined to answer, the refusal would be taken down in writing, just as any answer to an ordinary question. He desired him fully to understand that the question whether he was insured would be followed by those of—What amount?—what amount of goods were in stock at the time of the fire?—and what the loss amounted to?

Mr Turner—What is the object of the enquiry?

The Coroner—To ascertain whether the fire occurred through misadventure, or was caused wilfully.

Mr Turner—Merely to ascertain the origin of the fire.

The Coroner—To investigate the matter thoroughly, and thus give the necessary protection to the Insurance Companies.

After a moment's consideration, Mr Turner declined to answer the question, stating that it was introducing matters which he did not feel inclined to touch. Before answering the question he should like to take the advice of his solicitor, who was not present. At the same time, he wished it to be understood he had no objection to answer, but considered they were not the questions of the present enquiry.

The Coroner said they would adjourn the enquiry until 10 o'clock this morning, as it was impossible to go on satisfactorily until Mr Turner appeared again before them and refused or not, as the case might be, to answer the question after having consulted his solicitor. He (the Coroner) could not bring forward any other evidence until the question was preliminarily answered, as the other questions following it would be so important, that it would be necessary for Mr Turner to come there prepared to answer or to refuse to do so.

The enquiry was accordingly adjourned till 10 o'clock this morning.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Thursday 23 August 1855, page 1



FIRE IN RUNDLE-STREET. — All Persons having CLAIMS for assistance rendered in extinguishing the FIRE at Mr. Turner's, on the evening of the 17th instant, will please apply at the office of the undersigned, on Thursday or Friday, the 23rd and 24th instant. Members of the Insurance Fire Brigade who received tickets on the above evening will also apply. ACRAMAN, MAIN, LINDSAY, & CO., Currie-street.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 25 August 1855, page 2

INQUEST ON THE LATE FIRE IN RUNDLE-STREET.

Mr. Stevenson, the Coroner, held an inquest at the Norfolk Arms, Rundle-street, at 11 o'clock on Monday, for the purpose of enquiring into the circumstances attending the recent fire at Mr. Richard Turner's drapery shop, on the opposite side of the way. The following gentlemen were sworn upon the Jury:—Dr. Everard (foreman), Messrs. Thomas Hudson Beare, Robert Frew, Thomas Monteith, Charles Edward Stevenson, Robert Henry Grierson, William Bruce, John Francis Ross, John Thomas Church, Matthew Lodge, George Alston, George Brunskill, Edward John Cooke, and Tom Cox Bray.

The Coroner and Jury proceeded to view the premises, in which there appeared to be a considerable stock of drapery, the whole more or less injured. The canvas ceiling was wholly destroyed, and the rafters charred; but the roof being of iron, was uninjured. On their return to the jury-room,

Edward Augustus Phillips, surgeon dentist, residing at Mr. Uren's, Rundle street, was sworn—He stated that he resided next to the premises in question. On Friday evening, at a quarter or ten minutes to 10, he heard a strange crackling kind of noise and smelt fire. Put on his slippers, ran into the yard, and jumped over the rails into Mr. Turner's yard. Felt his way in the dark to the back door of the store, which he opened, as it was only on the latch. Found the place full of flames and smoke. It appeared to be alight in several places. Shut the door and came back immediately. An alarm was then given by Mrs. Uren. Returned to the premises with Mr. Uren. Both got buckets and continued for some time pouring water upon the fire. Mr. James and several other persons came in afterwards, and the fire was eventually got under. By the Coroner—There was a pile of goods on fire immediately in front, and there appeared fire in various places. The fire was detached on both sides of the room. By Mr. Grierson—Did not notice how the room was ceiled. The fire was running up the back towards the ceiling. By Mr. Ross—The fire was most bright and intense near the back door. By the Coroner—Did not observe that the fire had extended more than eight or ten feet into the room. The room was so full of smoke that they could not long remain there. Could not see the front part of the shop for the smoke. By a Juror—Mr. Turner had not called since to thank him for his assistance.

William Uren, shoemaker, Rundle-street—Believed Mr. Turner's store was the property of the South Australian Company. First heard of the fire at nearly 10 o'clock on Friday night. Was in bed reading the news-paper. Had no curtains. His attention was aroused by a very strong smell of fire, which he supposed to be in life own room. Opened the door, and heard from his wife that the next house was on fire. Went into the yard and saw smoke issuing from the roof. Ran round into Rundle-street and knocked at the front shutters, but no person answered. Saw Mr. George James, landlord of the Norfolk Arms, who went with him through the house to the back. Both crossed the fence into Mr. Turner's yard. Opened the back-door and saw the store on fire in various places—perhaps in ten different places. They were detached, and extended for about ten feet into the store. Did not observe the ceiling on fire ; did not notice it particularly at the time. The principal part of the fire was at the shelves on the right hand near the door. The back door was not used for taking in goods, there being no outlet from the yard.

Assisted in getting the fire under. Was the first to throw water upon it. Threw several bucketsful upon the shelves near the door, and handed several more to Mr. James. Had heard a rushing sound from the side of Mr. Turner's shop before he went to bed. Thought at the time that it was the wind rising for a storm, but had since believed that it was the

burning of the canvas ceiling. Not more than five minutes elapsed from the time of his hearing the noise to that of the alarm being given. Mr. Turner's store was usually closed from the front, there being no access the back way.

George Hamilton, Inspector of Mounted Police—Heard an alarm of fire at the Barracks on Friday night, and went to Mr. Turner's shop, the front-door of which had been forced open. It was then a little after 10 o'clock. There were several persons in the shop, who had nearly put out the fire. There were live embers in one or two places among the goods on the shelves. They were detached and were soon put out. Got the place cleared of all persons except those belonging to the Insurance Offices, and those who had some interest in the property. Mr. Turner was not there, but his assistant was on the spot. Made a strict examination of the premises. There was a kind of desk at the north-western corner made of a deal case, standing on end. Upon that there was a set of pigeon-holes containing a quantity of charred paper. In the centre there was a division holding three books, likewise partially burnt in the upper pigeon-hole on the left hand the papers were completely destroyed, and a hole burnt through the top of the wood. There was no room for a candle to have stood in the pigeon-hole. Looked through the other pigeon-holes and found in the lower one, on the right hand side, a box of lucifer matches upset. There were about a dozen of them lying on a piece of paper. They had taken fire, but had not burned the paper nor the wood. They had left a stain on the paper, and the edge of it was very slightly burnt. Looked carefully for traces of a candle, but found none. The fire appeared to have run up the side fittings from the desk to the ceiling, the whole of which was burnt. Believed that the various detached spots of fire were occasioned by pieces of the lighted ceiling falling upon them. A fire broke out in that way while he was there, in a case of parasols. Could form no opinion how the fire originated. Was satisfied it was not from the matches, as they had not even lighted the paper.

By Mr. Main, agent of the Royal Fire Office—Could offer no opinion why the papers in one pigeon-hole were burned while those in the others were only scorched. By a Juror—There had been a lamp hanging in the shop and portions of it were found upon the ground; but the goods near it were uninjured. By Mr. Turner—The pigeon-hole was more charred upon the top than the bottom.

George James, landlord of the Norfolk Arms, confirmed Mr. Uren's evidence so far as concerned himself. Saw the fire in a dozen different places, all detached. The canvas ceiling must have been burned before he came in, as he remained till the whole fire was extinguished, and did not see the ceiling in flames. Mr. Turner's shop was lighted with two or three camphine burners, and usually closed about 8 or 9 o'clock. Could not say at what time it closed on Friday last.

Andrew Loutet, clerk to Mr. Linklater, was walking along Rundle-street a little before 10 o'clock on Friday night. Smelt fire and saw a large lot of smoke in the street as he passed the Red Lion Inn. Traced it to Mr. Turner's shop, but could see nothing between the shutters or through the keyhole. There was a little smoke coming from the roof but no fire. While he was standing there with some other persons Mrs. Uren came out and gave the alarm. Knocked at the door, but getting no answer, witness and Glover, the barman at the Norfolk Arms, tore away the bar and broke open the shutters. Meanwhile Mr. Uren and some others had obtained an entrance from the back. Found fire on the right hand side within three feet of the front door. It was on the ground among some rolls of carpet. Had to go out on

account of the thick smoke. Returned immediately, and saw fire in several places not connected. Assisted in getting water to extinguish the fire, which had been all over the place, from one end to the other, and from top to bottom. By Mr. Turner—The fire towards the middle and front of the shop appeared to have come from the ceiling. By a Juror—There were the remains of shawls and other goods hanging about the shop.

Samuel Carvosso, superintendent of the four Insurance Companies' Fire Brigade, deposed that he attended the fire on Friday night. Entered the shop by the front door, which he found open. There was fire in several parts of the shop, and the ridge-piece of the roof was burning. Assisted in extinguishing it. Found a parcel of candles in a shed by the back door. Lit one of them and examined the desk. Confirmed Mr. Hamilton's evidence on the subject so far as it went; but noticed, in addition, that on the left-hand side of the desk there was a tin with camphine in it, lying on its side with the cork out. Poured some out to ascertain what it was. At about a quarter to 12 the fire broke out again near the centre of the shop. By Dr. Everard—Saw no signs of any cigar or pipe upon the premises.

Mr. Hutton, Inspector of Police, here remarked that he found in the shed with the candles a small meer-schaum pipe, which had evidently just been smoked.

Richard Turner (proprietor of the premises) was next examined. He deposed that his private residence was at Magill. He was there during Friday night, and heard of the fire at half-past 12 on Saturday morning. A person from one of the livery stables in town was sent out specially to him with the information. Got up instantly, saddled his horse, and rode into town. Had left the shop on Friday evening at 9 o'clock with his apprentice, George Lewis, and a carpenter who was at work there. Believed he was himself the last who stepped over the bar. Locked the front door and gave the boy the key. To the best of his belief the back-door was fastened. Enquired of the boy before he left, and he said, "Oh yes. all right" or something of that sort. It was his habit to have the back-door fastened. Had sometimes fastened it himself, and was under the impression that he had done so on Friday night; but the latch was a little defective, and might mislead any one. There was a light burning in the store when he left. Always left a light: almost invariably. It was the second lamp from the front, hanging about the centre of the shop. Never allowed a candle to be lighted for the boys to go to bed. They had liberty to go out after business to see their friends, but returned to sleep. The other boy was William Teague, his brother-in-law. Left the lamp burning as a means of protection in their absence. It was generally understood that they were to be back between 10 and 11 o'clock, according to the usual rule among drapers. Had forbidden them to keep late hours, and had generally the means of hearing if anything irregular went on. Did not feel at liberty to state through whom he had such means of knowing. The carpenter was engaged in repairing the front shutters, and had a light to work with. The boy Lewis attended him with the light. Was present during some portion of the time. Had been at the desk on Friday night. Took his meals, in the same part of the premises. Was sitting there between 8 and half past 8 o'clock on Friday evening, and had a candle there. Never smoked in the shop, nor allowed any other person to do so. There was a large window at the back of the shop. The pile of goods against it, which prevented the glare of the flames being seen through it, was put up nine months ago, but was occasionally altered and renewed. The ceiling of the shop was of calico. There were no curtains in front or the shelves. Believed he was insured, but that had nothing to do with the present enquiry, which was simply to ascertain the cause of the fire.

The Coroner said it was the main ingredient of the enquiry. He might decline, however, to answer it if he pleased. He should follow it up by asking the amount of the insurance, and the amount of the loss, and, if he refused to give the information, it could be ascertained from the agents of the Insurance Office.

Mr. Turner—What is the object of this enquiry ?

The Coroner—To find out whether this was an accidental fire, or the act of an incendiary.

Mr. Turner—I decline answering the question. I think I ought not to do so. I should prefer acting under the advice of my solicitor.

The Coroner—Is he here ?

Mr. Turner—He is not. I did not think it necessary to call upon him, but I should prefer consulting him before answering the question. At the same time I have no objection to answering the question, but consider it irrelevant to the present enquiry.

The Coroner said it would be necessary to adjourn the inquest till Mr. Turner was in a position either to answer the question, or to refuse positively to do so.

The inquest was adjourned at 3 o'clock p.m., to 10 o'clock next morning, the Jury being bound over to attend in their own recognizances of £20 each.

The Coroner and Jury re-assembled at 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning, at the Norfolk Arms.

Richard Turner was again examined, and His Worship cautioned him in the manner customary at inquests upon deaths, when a suspected person is under examination. He then enquired where he was insured, and for what sum. The witness first explained, in answer to a part of Mr. Phillips's evidence, taken the previous day, that the reason he had not called to thank that gentleman was that he did not know of his having rendered any assistance till he saw that morning's paper. All other persons who had assisted he had already thanked for their trouble. In reply to the Coroner, he said his stock in his store was insured for £1,000. It had been insured for the last five or six months with Acraman, Cooke, & Co., who were the agents, he believed, for the Royal Insurance Company. Since effecting the insurance, he had received additional goods into his store, perhaps to the value of about £2,000. Had been selling daily over the counter since the insurance, perhaps to the extent of what had cost him £3,000. Had sent away about £100 worth, or rather less, at one time, some two or three months ago; could not say the exact amount. Sent nothing away in bulk last week—nothing on Wednesday or Thursday last (correcting himself)—Had forgotten he sent away a trunk of parasols on one of those days. Sent it to Mr. Cresswell, an agent at the Port. Had sent nothing else away during the last week that had not been sold over the counter. Had sent away some goods sold to a hawker named Eyvel the previous week. The value was something under £200. Did not believe Eyvel had any residence. When he was in town he was usually to be found at witness's shop. He took the goods to Guichen Bay. He paid for a portion of them. They were removed at about 9 o'clock in the morning while business was going on. They were taken away in a dray, which they nearly filled. It was on Friday or Saturday week. Had not sent away any other large quantities of goods or goods in bulk since the insurance was effected. Had sold to other drapers on several occasions since the insurance, but not to any large extent. Persons had bought at various times, and run their accounts to £20 or £30; but no other large quantities had been sent away. The goods sold to the hawker consisted of different articles, varying in value from 2d to 5s. An entry of them

was made at the time. Had not taken stock since he commenced, but believed the value of the goods destroyed at the fire to be about £6,000. Believed that quantity was in the store before the fire commenced, and after he shut up the shop. Had goods nowhere else but in the store. Three of them left the store together, witness being the last who stepped over the bar at the door. There might have been goods within a foot or two of the lamp that was left burning. There were also things hanging on lines near the ceiling. It was the custom in most drapers' shops to have things hanging-up in a similar manner. When witness left the store the moon was up. Did not remember whether it was a windy night. The witness, on being pressed, said he did not remember what kind of weather it was, Understood it was a common practice for drapers to leave goods hanging in the manner described, viz., with a light in the store. It was a common practice in England, and it was so generally in Mr. McNicol's store, where witness was once employed. Had entire charge of the same in Mr. McNicol's absence, who was occasionally away a week or so at a time. The lights were put out when those persons whose custom it was to sleep in the shop went to bed. Thought the value of the stock in the store at the time of the fire would be £6,000. When he insured it was worth over £7,000.

By Mr. Boss—The value of the stock at the time of the fire was the current rate in Adelaide. As to the origin of the fire, they had two candles burning that night in the shop, by which the fire might have been caused. One was burning to light the carpenter, who was working in the middle of the shop; the other at 3 o'clock. When he thought of going home, the boy brought him a candle to look for his (witness's) cheque-book, which the boy lighted and placed in a bottle. Found his cheque-book, the boy holding the candle. Witness wrote a cheque by the light, and then put it out by spitting on the snuff, which remained on the candle. That was the only light he saw near his desk before he left the store. Was out with two friends for a short time, and when he returned (after he had written the cheque) just before 9 o'clock, found the boy and the carpenter in the shop, and the lamp burning higher, he reduced the light. There was then no appearance of fire. He left the shop, leaving the lamp burning, but the candles were put out. The candle was lighted by the boy with, witness believed, a lucifer match. Took his cheque-book home with him.

By the Coroner—Had not any explanation to give as to the probable cause of the fire. He had already stated all he knew.

By Mr. Bruce—His books were all safe. None of them had been injured.

By Mr. Boss—Did not leave any money in his cash-box. It was not his custom to do so. On the night of the fire left some cash rolled up in paper placed in a pile of goods, which, he found in the same place on Saturday morning. The piece of goods (of cotton) the money was in was not burned, but some pieces close to it were. The money was in notes and gold, viz., £3 10s. in gold, and £20 to £30 in notes. The amount of the cheque he drew when the boy brought the candle was £6 or £7. It was not his custom to take money he had in hand for expenses, as he preferred paying by cheque. Had not authorized any one to remove goods from the store since the fire. Believed he had desired his brother-in-law to get his clean clothes. Was not aware that anything had been so removed.

George Lewis, an apprentice to last witness for twelve months, said he was in the store during the entire evening on Friday last. Left with Mr. Turner a few minutes before 9. The carpenter left first, then witness, and Mr. Turner last. The carpenter had a lighted candle, and was working in the middle of the shop. All the lights were out except that and the

camphine lamp. Mr. Turner fastened the back door himself, having first asked witness if it had been done. Witness lighted a candle about 8 o'clock, at Mr. Turner's request, who said he wanted to look for some papers. The candle was put in a bottle and lighted at the candle which was burning near to where the carpenter was at work. Heard Mr. Turner blow the candle out shortly afterwards; did not see him, as the place where he was standing was piled up with goods. Heard Mr. Turner blow the candle out and spit upon it. There was no one in that part of the shop during the time named, nor afterwards, that witness knew of. Mr. Turner was the last person there. Did not know where Mr. Turner was in the habit of putting his money. Never saw him put it anywhere. Remembered goods being taken by a hawker about a week ago. There was very nearly a dray load. They were bought by Mr. Eyvel. Did not know of any more loads of goods having been removed. Smaller quantities had been sold. Witness could not form the slightest conjecture of the cause of the fire. Remembered calico having been sent to Melbourne. Mr Eyvel had lodgings in Pirie-street, but did not live in them. He was mostly out of town. Was quite sure no light fell from the candle used by the carpenter. The last person who was at the back part of the shop with a lighted candle on the night of the fire was Mr. Turner. There was no other person but him.

By Mr. Bruce—They had no camphine in the shop except what was in the lamp, They wanted some to trim the lamps in the window, and Mr. Turner tried the can in which it was kept, but there was none. The camphine was kept at the bottom end of the shop under the counter.

Mr. Young, of the firm of McNicol & Co., corroborated the statement of Mr. Turner as to the custom of leaving a lamp burning in drapers' stores.

Charles Kegg, carpenter, said the witness, Lewis, held the candle part of the time, on the evening of the fire, while he was at work in the middle of the shop. Mr. Turner left the shop in company with witness and the apprentice. Was quite sure the fire was not owing to any carelessness on his part. Had seen Mr. Turner since the fire, but nothing had transpired about the fire. There were no shavings inside the shop. He did not make any in the work he was engaged in.

George Main, merchant—Was one of the agents of the Royal Insurance Company, Mr. Turner was insured in the office for £4,000 on his stock-in-trade. Mr. Turner had given witness to understand that he should claim for the full amount of the insurance. They had no valuation made of the stock at the time the insurance was effected. The valuation made since the fire by Messrs. Skelton and Parrinton, merchants, of Adelaide, was about £3,200. The policy had not been varied. It had not been either increased or decreased.

By Mr. Brunskill—The date of the policy was six months ago. It was current.

William Parrinton, importer of Manchester and other goods—Had examined, with Mr. Skelton, the goods of Mr. Turner. Had completed their valuation of the goods on Saturday. They took an estimate at the London invoice price, viz., £2,258, which, with a third added to cover expenses of importation, or 20 per cent, added to the wholesale price, would bring them to the cost price to Mr. Turner, provided they were all bought in Manchester or London. He could not replace them for 20 per cent. on the invoice, or at less than a third. Some of them were out of season, others were saleable. The general character of the goods, for the coming season, was that they could not be considered very saleable. They took a general but careful view of the stock and fixtures. Mr. Turner was not present. Witness had been accustomed for up-wards of 20 years to value stocks similarly situated, in London and

different parts of England. By Mr. Turner —The slop goods, calicoes, flannels, and most of the goods in the window, were saleable all the year round. By Mr. Grierson—Believed the present price of goods in London was lower now than when the present stock was purchased. The freight was now lower. The valuation he had given was, he was sure, very near the mark. Joseph Skelton, merchant, corroborated the evidence of the last witness.

In reply to the Coroner, Mr. Turner said he had a witness to call, who could speak to the value of the stock, who was not then present. The person he mentioned thought of purchasing it. The Coroner thought such evidence immaterial, said the Jury had heard the evidence, and it was within their knowledge that a fire had taken place. It was clear that there had been great carelessness and remissness somewhere. A large amount of property had been placed in danger, and it would be for them to consider their verdict.

After an absence of half-an-hour the Jury returned, when the Coroner read the following as the verdict:—That from, the evidence produced, the Jury have not been able to arrive at any conclusion as to the origin of the fire in the said premises ; and the Jury consider that the practice, as disclosed in the evidence, of leaving a camphine lamp burning in premises covered with calico ceiling, and near goods easy of combustion, is highly dangerous and improper. Mr. Everard, the foreman, said he was requested by the Jury to state that they thought Government ought to afford Jurors and witnesses some compensation for giving attendance from day to day in the investigation of such matters as they had just disposed of. The Coroner quite concurred that the request was most reasonable, and said he would forward the recommendation to the Government.

Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Friday 21 September 1855, page 2

DOMESTIC NEWS.

Alarm of Fire.—Last night, about 9 o'clock, the fire-alarm bell was rung, to the great consternation of many of the citizens. It luckily turned out, however, that the cause of alarm was nothing more than an increased volume of smoke and a few sparks of fire from the chimney of the Bank of Australasia. A water cart was promptly in attendance, but happily it was not required.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Thursday 18 October 1855, page 2

Alarming Fire. — On Wednesday morning, between the hours of 6 and 7, a female servant in the employ of Mr. Ramsay, the proprietor of the Napoleon Bonaparte, observed large volumes of smoke issuing from the trapdoor of a liquor-cellar underneath a portion of the premises, and discovering that the place was on fire, sent immediately to the Police-Office. Sergeant Davis gave the necessary directions for manning the fire-engine stationed there, and it was on the premises of the inn within a few moments after the first alarm was given. The same active officer immediately proceeded to the Barracks, and the efficient assistance of the soldiers was instantly obtained. Shortly afterwards the aid of the other fire-engines was also given, and, by the united exertions of the men, the flames were subdued and ultimately extinguished before 8 o'clock. The floor of the bar-parlour and the side entrance were destroyed by the combined agency of the fire and the breakages found necessary to introduce the hose so as to cast the jet of water immediately upon the flames. On entering the cellar it was found that the joists and ceiling were charred so as to be little more than a shell. During the conflagration a hogshead of brandy burst, and its contents becoming ignited, materially added to the danger. It has been conjectured subsequently that a cinder

from the fire (kept in all night on this occasion, owing to the illness of the lamented Mr. Hamilton) in the bar-parlour, in some way burnt a hole through the floor, and smouldering for a considerable time, ignited the straw and packages kept in the cellar; or that a lighted cigar had fallen through an aperture in the trap-door, and, coming in contact with some loose straw that had been used for packing porter, had originated the fire. Other accounts of the supposed cause of the fire give slightly different versions of the matter; but as all are based upon mere conjecture, it is difficult to select any more probable than the two suppositions quoted. The amount of damage sustained has not yet been ascertained, but it must be considerable. It is said that the stock, furniture, &c, are insured by Mr. Ramsay with Messrs. Fox & Co., in the Alliance Company ; and the older portion of the building by Mr. Coglin, with Messrs. Acraman, Cooke, & Co., in the Royal Insurance Company. The exertions of the parties engaged in extinguishing the fire are worthy of the highest commendation for the zeal and activity displayed, and the efficiency of the Assistant Brigade was on this occasion placed beyond a doubt,

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Friday 26 October 1855, page 3

FIRES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REGISTER.

Sir — Referring to my letter in your impression of this day, I am informed that the Fire Insurance Companies have given the following Sums to the Military : — For their services at the fire at my store, £20; at the Flour-mill, £20; and Mr. Debney's, £20. These acts of justice will I am sure give satisfaction to the public, and induce the belief that they will on all occasions liberally reward all who render efficient assistance. In conclusion, I would direct your attention to the necessity for some organized arrangement of those employed. Thus, the Police should, under the superintendence of the chief officer present, keep a clear way for the water carts and engines, protect property removed from buildings, and preserve order among the crowd. The military, acting under the direction of the Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, should be employed in working engines, fetching water when not available by carts, and removing property from buildings on fire or in danger. The Brigade to ascertain that all inmates are safe, to have sole charge of the hose, ladders, &c., pull down insured sheds and buildings, &c., when deemed essential to prevent the extension of fires, and to employ supernumeraries when requisite, by furnishing each individual so employed with a ticket of appointment. Hoping these suggestions may produce a well-developed plan of checking fires, I am, Sir,&c., ABRAHAM ABBAHAMS. Peel-street October 25, 1855.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 27 October 1855, page 3

A fire behind the Sturt Hotel, Grenfell Street, Adelaide.

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE.

About half-past 10 o'clock on Monday night last a fire broke out in the stables at the rear of the Sturt Hotel, Grenfell-street, and raged for some time with such fury as to threaten destruction far and wide. The wooden buildings, including vehicle-sheds, harness-rooms, and provender-stores, were totally destroyed, together with six horses and a quantity of provender; but the alarm having been promptly given, and the assistance of the imperial Alliance and Royal, the Police, and other engines, with the Fire Brigade, all rendered with the most praiseworthy alacrity, the fire was subdued, although not quite extinguished, about 11

o'clock. As usual, the buildings and fences of broad palings in the immediate vicinity were very extensively sacrificed, and the damage is estimated at a large but unascertained sum. At one period of the fire the workshop of Mr. Mayfield, cabinet-maker, was in imminent danger. Fortunately Mr. Nitchke (coppersmith) and his partner had, on the first alarm, proceeded to the fire with a port-able engine of their own manufacture; and to their exertions in preventing the communication of the flames from the burning vehicle-shed to Mayfield's workshop, the safety of that section of Rundle-street, extending from Mayfield's to Gawler-place, may be attributed. Shortly after Mr. Nitchke's portable engine commenced playing, the Imperial Alliance and Royal fire-engine, strongly manned, arrived. The Police engine was soon after on the ground, and commenced playing effectively on the burning stables; and at a later period we noticed the Cornwall engine approaching through an opening from Rundle-street. All the engines were worked incessantly, and, aided by the bright moonlight, there was a constantly-increasing supply of water—every moment adding to the number of carts employed in that toilsome but all-important duty. The first water-cart on the ground was that of John Bews, and he was followed by others in rapid succession. From the moment the fire was discovered it was impossible to save the wooden buildings. In addition to the six horses, a large quantity of provender and valuable harness, the uninsured property of Mr. B. Grieg, has been destroyed. It is also understood that a considerable quantity of luggage, belonging to various parties, was stored in one of the wooden buildings, which was totally consumed. Great praise is due to the persons who mounted the roof of the outhouses of the Sturt Hotel, and, with water and wet blankets, preserved it from ignition, and by that means saved a long and valuable pile of buildings in Grenfell-street from destruction. We noticed among the many earnest and energetic labourers to arrest the progress of the devouring element, Superintendent Tolmer and Inspector Hamilton of the Mounted Police; also Sergeants Sullivan and Nolan and a strong body of the Metropolitan Force. Mr. George Galbraith and Mr. Benjamin Nind were also early at the scene of disaster, and assisted most energetically, as did others whose names have not yet transpired.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 27 October 1855, page 3

INQUEST ON THE FIRE.

Mr. Stevenson held an inquest on Tuesday afternoon, at the Sturt Hotel, to enquire into the cause of the destructive fire which occurred the previous night at the rear of the premises. The Jury having chosen Mr. Joseph Solomon Henry as their foreman, and taken the usual oath, proceeded to examine the premises. On their return, the following evidence was taken:— William Sandover, landlord of the Sturt Hotel, had held the premises about a year and nine months. The stables which had been burnt down were included in his lease. They were underlet by him to Mr. Benjamin Greig, livery stable keeper, who had occupied them about a year. Mr. Greig was of very sober and regular habits, and usually went to bed between 8 and 9 o'clock. The stables were generally well attended to. Mr. Greig was in the habit of examining them in the evening with a lantern. he never allowed the candle to be taken out of it in the stables. Mr Greig had recently been putting up a new hay-shed adjoining the stables. Witness saw at about 10 minutes after 10 o'clock that all was quiet. One of the ostlers named Joseph Haws had previously left the hotel and gone to his bed adjoining the stables. At 20 minutes after 10 witness was alarmed by a loud knocking at his door, followed by cries of "Fire!" Ran out as soon as he could find the key of the door, and saw that the whole of the length of the stables was on fire. Had no recent quarrel with any one, nor had any reason to suppose that any one harboured any malicious feelings against

him, except one man, who was a notorious character. His name was James Dalton, who, some months ago, had taken one of Mr. Curnow's cottages for a short time. Witness knowing him to be a brothel-keeper, used his influence with Mr. Curnow to get him expelled, for which Dalton had since threatened "to serve him out."

Benjamin Greig was in the constant practice of closing the stables at a few minutes after 8 o'clock in the evening. There were 10 horses in the stable the previous evening, four of which were removed; the other six were burned to death. The Coroner here stated that he had that morning ordered the bodies of the horses to be buried.

Examination continued—The stables were safe when witness left them the previous evening, shortly after 8 o'clock. Two of the horses which were burned belonged to himself. One of them, named Young Plenipo, he valued at £150, and the other at 30 guineas. Two of the other horses belonged to Mr. Palmer, one to Mr. Coven, and the other to Mr. Bassett, of Strathalbyn. There was a lane leading from Grenfell-street to the stables. When witness was first called up, he saw the fire burning from the corner of the back of the stables, opposite to the heads of the horses. The fire was then rising towards the eaves.

By a Juror—The stable was not locked. One of the ostlers usually slept there, but was not present when the fire broke out. Inspector Hamilton saw the fire shortly after 10 o'clock. The adjoining sheds were then on fire. Mr. Nitschke's small engine was brought first to work, and very much assisted in preventing the spread of the flames to the westward. Mr. Greig recalled—Had taken down part of the sheds with the intention of putting up iron walls. Saw the man named Dalton in Grenfell-street with a woman, either that day or the previous one. Could not remember which.

Mr. Sandover recalled—Was insured on the large stables for £55, and on the small stables for £15. The premises were also insured by Mr. Curnow and Mrs. Fuller, who held underleases. There was a well on the premises, which might have been used had there been sufficient length of hose connected with the fire-engine.

Heinrich Nagel resided near the Sturt Hotel. Was at home the previous evening. His wife called his attention to the fire when it first broke out. It was near the corner of the stable, but very quickly spread in a direction from south to north. The fire, when he first saw it, was burning outside the stables near the lane running from Grenfell-street.

Joseph Haws had been in Mr. Greig's employ as ostler about a year. Usually slept in the office adjoining the stables. Did not go into the stables the previous evening with a light. Was in bed and asleep when the fire broke out. There was a litter of straw in front of the stable. Was certain the fire did not originate inside of the stable. Smoked, but did not do so the evening of the fire in the stables. Had no knowledge as to the cause of the fire. It might have been caused by the remains of a lighted cigar thrown near the stables.

James Dalton was called on by the Coroner. He said he was a ostler, but was unable to work. He had been to the diggings and earned enough to keep him without work. Was drunk all the previous day, and did not leave the Queen's Arms in the evening. Was at one time living near Mr. Sandover. Was turned out of the house before he had been four hours in it. Never threatened Mr. Sandover on that account. Did not know by whom the stables were occupied.

The Coroner remarked that Mr. Greig had taken every possible precaution to prevent the calamity which had occurred. He was not insured, and was probably ruined. Mr. Sandover was insured to a limited amount, but no blame could possibly attach to either. He did not think there was any evidence to implicate the man Dalton, but had no doubt that the fire was accidental. It was one of those cases which would occasionally occur; and he thought it was the duty of the Jury to call the attention of the Corporation to the necessity of making provision for prohibiting any further temporary erections in the thickly-populated parts of the city of combustible materials. It was a subject in which they were all interested; and no one could tell how soon more extensive calamities might occur if proper precautions were not taken to prevent them.

The Jury returned a verdict that the fire was accidental, accompanied with the recommendation to the Corporation suggested by the Coroner.

The Coroner said the agents of the several insurance companies had during the last 18 months taken a good deal of trouble to impress upon the proper authorities the necessity of a Building Act. It was no fault of theirs that the necessary regulations were not made and enforced.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Monday 3 December 1855, page 3

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE. - Yesterday morning, shortly after midnight, the alarming cry of fire was raised in Hindley-street. The police and the officers of the fire brigade were soon on the spot, while the pealing of the alarm bell at the Station-house, and the shrill note of the steam-whistle by the riverside, soon called into activity a large number of anxious citizens. The fire was first discovered in a yard at the rear of premises occupied by H. Figg, poulterer and greengrocer. Mr. Carvosso, the active Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, promptly forced open the adjoining store belonging to Mr. Harris, ironmonger, where he knew there was a quantity of gunpowder, which he carried with some books and other matters to be deposited in a place of safety. By that time the Imperial engine was on the ground, and although, owing to the hour, comparatively few of the Brigade were in attendance, their place was well supplied, through the kindness of Colonel Moore, by an energetic party of the military. Mr. Carvosso mounted on the iron roof of Mr. Harris's store, and played effectively so long as the water supply was sustained upon the burning mass in Figg's yard. The supply of water, however, falling off for a short time, the flames communicated with the roof of Peacock's-buildings, and from that to the roof of the old Mechanics' Institute, which had for some time been used as a store by Mr. C. Gooch. It is supposed that the water-carts that hurried to the spot, delivering at the outlet a tolerable supply, which they had overnight, had then to encounter the delay of proceeding to the riverside to be replenished, and that caused the falling off in the service of the engines, which enabled the flames to extend so as to make the preservation of Gooch's store a matter of impossibility. The Cornwall engine took up a position in Peacock's-place, where, after some time, a good supply, of water was obtained from the cellar of the Royal Hotel and a still larger reservoir on the premises of Solomon and Co. To this, and the praiseworthy exertions of the persons engaged, may be attributed, under Providence, the fact that the fire did not spread to a much more ruinous extent. As it was, the wooden buildings at the rear of Figg's home were completely destroyed. A valuable bull-dog, tied up there, bit some persons severely who loosed him just in time to save his life; but a bull slut, the property of Mr. Ferris, of Port Adelaide, tied up there, was burnt to death. The upper storey of Gooch's store, formerly the reading-room of

the Mechanics' Institute, was completely destroyed with all its contents. There must have been a great quantity of dry and inflammable goods there, as on the roof falling in the flames rose to a great height, and large patches of ignited timber floated away on the wind, not only as far as the front street, but in some cases falling on the opposite houses. Fortunately the exertions of the people, aided by a slight shower of rain, confined the flames to Gooch's store and a small portion of the roof of Peacock's buildings, which first caught fire from the flames in Figg's yard, but was with great difficulty prevented from extending. Indeed, at one time considerable apprehension was felt for the safety of the Black Bull Inn, as the burning masses were driven against that house and on to its roof in alarming quantities. The horses were removed from the stables, and persons placed with wet blankets and other appliances on the roof to preserve the property. The Police engine was, as usual, early at the scene of the fire. The men rushed it into the yard of the Black Horse Inn, Leigh-street, but owing to the fact that the watermen were not paid for the supplies to that engine on the occasion of the fires at the Sturt stables and the Napoleon Bonaparte they naturally preferred delivering the water to the engines whose conductors could guarantee payment. In consequence of this unfortunate circumstance, a powerful engine and a trained and active body of men were comparatively use-less as firemen, while, through the want of some sufficiently intelligent officer to direct their efforts in another direction, the most useless and lamentable destruction of property took place. Some persons, anxious to assist in saving the stock and goods of Alderman Lazar, made dreadful havoc of his furniture. Although his house was untouched by the flames, he has suffered a loss, we understand, almost as great as if it was burnt. If the Metropolitan Police, who were standing idly by an engine without water, had been told off by their Inspector in sufficient force to proper points, to prevent the unauthorized or indiscreet removal of property and its unnecessary destruction, they would have been of great service on the occasion; as it was, they could not work their engine, and there was no one capable of directing them to the performance of the still more important service that was neglected. Those remarks only apply to the detachment of the Metropolitan Force. Superintendent Tolmer was on this, as on every similar occasion, most actively and usefully employed. Inspector Hamilton also did good service in urging on the water-carters to activity, and in directing them to the spots where their supplies were most wanted. Among the persons not already mentioned who were early present at the fire, or who afterwards distinguished themselves by their exertions, we may mention Sergeant Badman of the Foot Police, Sergeant-Major Hall of the Mounted Police, and Mr. Rhodes, jun., ironmonger, of Rundle-street. Mr. Nitchke, copper-smith, was on the ground with his little engine that did such good service at the Sturt Stables fire, but like the Police engine it could not command a supply of water. Without wishing to stigmatize the individual, we may relate a fact to warn others from acting indiscreetly in future, even with "the best intentions." A water-carter was delivering his load to the Imperial engine, from whose conductor he was certain of payment. An officer of police came up and ordered the man to deliver the water to Nitchke's engine. The man demurred on the ground of payment; the officer insisted, unconditionally, and seized the horse's head, with the avowed intention of taking the water. The owner of horse, cart, and water thought this was stretching authority too far. The officer convinced him he was quite capable of stretching it further, and ordered him into custody. At this point another man, who was alive to the importance of retaining the waterman at work, innocently offered to go to the Station in his place. Mr. Carvosso fortunately observed the pother, and put an end to it amicably by

promising the waterman that he (Mr. Carvosso) would pay for the water thus forcibly taking from his engine.

Thus the waterman secured his right and the officer maintained his dignity; but it is to be hoped he will not be inclined to act in such an arbitrary and unjustifiable manner again. The Coroner will hold, at 2 o'clock p.m. this day, an inquest at the Napoleon Bonaparte Hotel, is to the origin of the fire, which might have been fearfully destructive to life and property; it would therefore be out of place to hazard any conjectures, or to express any opinions on the subject at present. Another account is as follows :— "The first alarm of fire was given by the fire-bell of Barlow & Sons, Hindmarsh square, and the Imperial and Royal engine, drawn by men, was on the spot and ready for action before the arrival of the military and police. Although a large portion of the city was threatened with destruction, the Police engine, almost as powerful as the others if properly supplied and worked, was rendered nearly useless, because neither the Government nor the Insurance Companies will pay for a supply of water to it. Something ought to be done in this respect. What has become of the fire-annihilators belonging to the Mutual Insurance Company? Might they not be used to advantage in preventing the progress of destruction in a locality like Hindley-street? In order that a prompt supply of water might be secured in case of fire at night, a law came into force a few weeks ago to compel water-carriers to keep their casks full at night. This law, at present, is almost a dead letter; for, on the alarm of fire, most of them have to go to the Torrens before they can render any assistance, and there are some who keep half a load in order to be first at the fire, and thus obtain the premium and the full-load price. These things require looking into." The services of the military were, as usual, deserving of the highest praise. The arrangements for the preservation of property on the ground, or for its safe removal, are described as very defective, and improved regulations are strongly urged; but the assistance afforded was, nevertheless, so prompt and energetic that before half-past 3 a.m. the fire was completely subdued.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Tuesday 4 December 1855, page 3

THE FIRE IN HINDLEY-STREET.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REGISTER.

Sir — I observe in your account of the fire last Saturday night that you compliment me and persons under my direction for our prompt and useful exertions, while, you assign to the engine and brigade of the Cornwall Insurance Company a somewhat insignificant part in the drama. I therefore feel it due to Mr. Pappin and his men to state that, to the best of my knowledge, the Cornwall engine was in the yard fronting Peacock's-buildings (a very useful and effective position) before, or at least quite as soon, as the engine under my control arrived at the fire; and that, but for their well directed efforts, the Royal Hotel and Mr. Solomon's premises must have been destroyed. I would, also observe that the very praiseworthy services of Mr. Barlow, jun., the hoseman of the Imperial, Royal, and Alliance engine, has escaped your notice. Trusting you will insert this in your valuable paper, I am, Sir, &c, SAML. CARVOSSO. Blyth-street, December 3, 1855.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 8 December 1855, page 3

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE IN HINDLEY-STREET.

On Sunday morning last, shortly after midnight, the alarming cry of fire was raised in Hindley-street. The police and the officers of the fire brigade were soon on the spot, while the pealing of the alarm bell at the Station-house, and the shrill note of the steam-whistle by the riverside, soon called into activity a large number of anxious citizens. The fire was first discovered in a yard at the rear of premises occupied by H. Figg, poulterer and greengrocer. Mr. Carvosso, the active Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, promptly forced open the adjoining store belonging to Mr. Harris, ironmonger, where he knew there was a quantity of gun-powder which he carried with some books and other matters to be deposited in a place of safety. By that time the Imperial engine was on the ground, and although, owing to the hour, comparatively few of the Brigade were in attendance, their place was well supplied, through the kindness of Colonel Moore, by an energetic party of the military. Mr. Carvosso mounted on the iron roof of Mr. Harris's store and played effectively so long as the water supply was sustained upon the burning mass in Figg's yard." The supply of water, however, falling off for a short time, the flames communicated with the roof of Peacock's-buildings, and from that to the roof of the old Mechanics' Institute, which had for some time been used as a store by Mr. C. Gooch. It is supposed that the water-carts that hurried to the spot, delivering at the outset a tolerable supply, which they had overnight, had then to encounter the delay of proceeding to the riverside to be replenished, and that caused the falling off in the service of the engines, which enabled the flames to extend so as to make the preservation of Gooch's store a matter of impossibility. The Cornwall engine took up a position in the yard fronting Peacock's Buildings, and was on the ground about the same time as the Imperial engine. After some time, a good supply of water was obtained from the cellar of the Royal Hotel, and a still larger reservoir on the premises of Solomon & Co, and it was due to the exertions of Mr. Peppin and his brigade that these valuable premises escaped destruction. The services of Mr. Barlow, Jun., the horseman of the Imperial, Royal, and Alliance engine, must not pass without notice. To the praiseworthy exertions of the persons engaged, and the opportune supply of water obtained as above described, may be attributed, under Providence, the fact that the fire did not spread to a much more ruinous extent. As it was, the wooden buildings at the rear of Figg's house were completely destroyed. A valuable bull-dog, tied up there, bit some persons severely who loosed him just in time to save his life; but a bull slut, the property of Mr. Ferris, of Port Adelaide, tied up there, was burnt to death. The upper storey of Gooch's store, formerly the reading-room of the Mechanics' Institute, was completely destroyed with all its contents. There must have been a great quantity of dry and inflammable goods there, as on the roof falling in the flames rose to a great height, and large patches of ignited tinder floated away on the wind, not only as far as the front street, but in some cases falling on the opposite houses. Fortunately the exertions of the people, aided by a slight shower of rain, confined the flames to Gooch's store and a small portion of the roof of Peacock's buildings, which first caught fire from the flames in Figg's yard, but was with great difficulty prevented from extending. Indeed, at one time considerable apprehension was felt for the safety of the Black Bull Inn, as the burning masses were driven against that house and on to its roof in alarming quantities. The horses were removed from the stables, and persons placed with wet blankets and other appliances on the roof to preserve the property. The Police engine was, as usual, early at the scene of the fire. The men rushed it into the yard of the Black Horse Inn, Leigh-street, but owing to the fact that the watermen were not paid for the supplies to that engine on the occasions of the fires at the Sturt stables and the Napoleon Bonaparte they naturally preferred delivering the water to the engines whose conductors could

guarantee payment. In consequence of this unfortunate circumstance, a powerful engine and a trained and active body of men were comparatively useless as firemen, while, through the want of some sufficiently intelligent officer to direct their efforts in another direction, the most useless and lamentable destruction of property took place. Some persons, anxious to assist in saving the stock and goods of Alderman Lazar, made dreadful havoc of his furniture. Although his house was untouched by the flames, he has suffered a loss, we understand, almost as great as if it was burnt. If the Metropolitan Police, who were standing idly by an engine without water, had been told off by their Inspector in sufficient force to proper points, to prevent the unauthorized or indiscreet removal of property and its unnecessary destruction, they would have been of great service on the occasion; as it was, they could not work their engine, and there was no one capable of directing them to the performance of the still more important service that was neglected. Those remarks only apply to the detachment of the Metropolitan Force. Superintendent Tolmer was on this, as on every similar occasion, most actively and usefully employed. Inspector Hamilton also did good service in urging on the water-carters to activity, and in directing them to the spots where their supplies were most wanted. Among the persons not already mentioned who were early present at the fire, or who afterwards distinguished themselves by their exertions, we may mention Sergeant Badman of the Foot Police, Sergeant-Major Hall of the Mounted Police, and Mr. Rhodes, jun., ironmonger, of Rundle-street. Mr. Nitchke, coppersmith, was on the ground with his little engine that did such good service at the Sturt Stables fire, but like the Police engine it could not command a supply of water. Without wishing to stigmatize the individual, we may relate a fact to warn others from acting indiscreetly in future, even with "the best intentions." A water-carter was delivering his load to the Imperial engine, from whose conductor he was certain of payment. An officer of police came up and ordered the man to deliver the water to Nitchke's engine. The man demurred on the ground of payment; the officer insisted, unconditionally, and seized the horse's head, with the avowed intention of taking the water. The owner of horse, cart, and water thought this was stretching authority too far. The officer convinced him he was quite capable of stretching it further, and ordered him into custody. At this point another who was alive to the importance of retaining the waterman at work, innocently offered to go to the Station in his place. Mr. Carvosso fortunately observed the pother, and put an end to it amicably by promising the waterman that he (Mr. Carvosso) would pay for the water thus forcibly taking from his engine. Thus the waterman secured his right and the officer-maintained his dignity; but it is to be hoped he will not be inclined to act in such an arbitrary and unjustifiable manner again.

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Tender any assistance, and there are some who keep half a load in order to be first at the fire, and thus obtain the premium and the full-load price. These things require looking into." The services of the military were, as usual, de-serving of the highest praise. The arrangements for the preservation of property on the ground, or for its safe removal, are described as very defective, and improved regulations are strongly urged; but the assistance afforded was, nevertheless, so prompt and energetic that before half-past 3 a.m. the fire was completely subdued.

INQUEST.

The Coroner held an enquiry on Monday afternoon, at the Napoleon Bonaparte, into the causes of the recent fire in Hindley-street, when the following gentlemen attended as Jurors:—Messrs. Neville Blyth (foreman), George Thompson, John Barnett, George Collie, John Burrowes, Gustavus Leon, James Counsell, James Phillips, Frederick Sach, John Hodgkiss, George Dale, Mark Fooks, and John Daniels.

Mr. Gwynne was in attendance to watch the proceedings on behalf of the Insurance Companies.

The Jury having been sworn, the Coroner requested them to accompany him to the scene of the disaster, and at the same time, adverting to the fact of the presence of a legal gentleman on the part of the Insurance Companies, remarked that the special object of the enquiry was to ascertain whether the fire had been caused by accident or design, and, therefore, the object of the attendance of Mr. Gwynne would be answered; but, nevertheless, questions as to the origin of the fire would be allowed on the part of those Companies.

The first witness sworn was Harry Figg, who deposed that he occupied the premises where the fire broke out. He left the premises, about 8 o'clock on Saturday evening, in charge of a young man named Charles Farley. He had had his back premises cleared on Thursday last, and usually kept poultry there; but on this occasion there were none. There were two dogs chained up in the yard; there was no straw in the shed, or on any part of the floor. He was insured to the extent of £500 or £600 on his retail stock, and had sent in a claim for the sum of £55 only. There had been an alarm of fire on a previous occasion; but it was found on investigation that there was no reason for such alarm.

By Mr. Gwynne—Was in the habit of taking a candle on Saturday evenings into the back yard to see to lock up the back entrance. He lived in Grote-street, and when aroused immediately made the best of his way down to his premises in Hindley-street.

Charles Earley, assistant to Mr. Figg, deposed that he had charge of the premises on Saturday evening, at half-past 8. No one resided on the premises, and witness left at about 9 o'clock, previously passing through the yard with a lighted candle, and putting it out, locked the back-gate. The candle was placed on the top of a hen-coop, and was thoroughly extinguished; the combustible materials were removed two days previously. He did not believe the candle could have done mischief if it had been alight.

John Davis, sergeant in the Metropolitan Police, deposed about a fortnight ago there was a report that there was a fire in the back part of Mr. Figg's premises; there was a smell of burning rags, and a crowd of people collected. It was about 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening.

John Lazar, jeweller and silversmith, stated that a little after 12 on the night of Saturday he was awake by an alarm of fire, and saw a large body of flame in the back of Mr. Figg's

premises. He told the policemen to break the door open to get to the flame, as a few buckets of water might extinguish the fire. But they said they must not break the door open, and repeated that reply in answer to his continued remonstrance. Some little time elapsed before water was procured. About three weeks ago he discovered a smell of fire, and passing through his back premises he mounted the steps of the Mechanics Institute, looked over into Mr. Figg's premises, and ascertained that the smell of fire was more distinct and strong. A policeman accompanied him, and they sent for Mr. Figg, who arrived about a quarter of an hour afterwards; and a policeman accompanied him in an inspection, but nothing was found amiss.

By Mr. Daniels—Witness was clearly of opinion if the place had been broken open, and a few buckets of water applied, the fire would have been extinguished.

By the Coroner—The fire certainly did not commence in the roof and burn downwards.

Sylvester Badman, sergeant in the Metropolitan Police, deposed that about 20 minutes past 12 o'clock he discovered the fire in a shed belonging to Mr. Figg, near the back thoroughfare. The fire was close to the gate, which was burning. He could not get buckets or water, and was obliged to get water in tubs. At that time the fire was confined to so narrow a space that a small supply of water and a few buckets would have enabled them to put it out. There were some cages and boxes in the yard. Had no doubt as to where the fire originated; it was by the shed. The Police engine came some time after the others, but was not supplied with water. Did not know any other cause than that the payment of water for its use had been disputed by the Insurance Companies, who had always paid for the water until the fire at the Napoleon Bonaparte. The engine was consequently of no use.

By Mr. Gwynne—Was not aware of any arrangement for the supply of water to the Police engine. The shed in which the fire originated was built of broad paling of stringybark. Saw no candlestick near the gate.

Hyam Isaacs, of the Black Horse Inn, Leigh-street, deposed that he found the paling and the roof of the low shed on fire, on the first alarm; but there was no litter or straw lying in the yard. Persons might obtain access to that yard from the street. If assistance had been rendered quickly the fire would have been extinguished.

By Mr. Gwynne—There was a quantity of straw and rubbish in the back thoroughfare, but he was not aware whether that rubbish had been brought from the premises of Mr. Figg.

Mr. Figg recalled—There was a quantity of boxes in the backyard—perhaps as many as thirty—used for packing eggs with sawdust.

C. Earley recalled—The coop on which he placed the candle was three or four feet from the gate, and he used the light to see that the place was properly fastened. A lantern would have done as well.

By Mr. Dale—As far as he was aware the candle was entirely extinguished when he left the premises.

Mr. Gooch (who was not sworn) stated he left his premises at about 6 o'clock, and all was perfectly safe then. He was insured to the extent of £2,000, and had stock to the value of £8,000, of which he expected to save stock to the value of £1,500.

John Burnett stated that he had suffered damage to his stock by removal on the occasion of the fire, and had put in a claim for above £1,600. He took stock on Saturday last, and that on the occasion of having his goods repaired. He had a fire recently on his own premises, and then made a claim for £1,000, which he subsequently reduced to £260, and then sold his damaged stock.

By Mr. Gwynne—Completed his stocktaking at 10 o'clock on Saturday morning, and ascertained that it amounted to £1,699, the exact sum which he had claimed from the Insurance Companies.

Inspector Hamilton deposed that, though the Police engine was on the spot, it was not worked, as (he heard) it was not supplied with water. He only interfered on one occasion, as to the supply of Nitchke's engine, as it was small enough to be placed where others could not go, and being in a position where there was a vast quantity of inflammatory matter, with turpentine and gunpowder in the close vicinity. It was most effective, and in all probability prevented the ignition of matter which must have led to the most disastrous results. He interfered only in this case to procure a supply for this engine, at a time when he believed all the other engines except the Police engine were supplied.

By Mr. Gwynne—There was a system of tickets connected with the supply of water to the Police engine, and each person supplying water was furnished with a ticket, which entitled him to receive payment. There were several sums lying in the Treasury now unclaimed. He accounted for the refusal of the watermen to supply the Police engine to the supposition that they disliked the long process by which payments were made.

The Coroner said there could not be the least doubt but that the fire originated in Mr. Figg's yard. The question to be considered was whether the disaster was occasioned by the negligence of Charles Earley, Mr. Figg's assistant, in blowing out the candle so near the gate. There was no reason to attribute anything but negligence; and he thought they could come to no other conclusion than that the fire was accidental. There was a point of some consequence to the future welfare of the city—the deficiency in the supply of water; for it was obvious the engine under the charge of the Police would have been very effective with a proper supply of water. It would be well to direct the attention of the proper authorities to the matter. The present deficient supply was a fault resting either with the Government or the Corporation, he could not say which; but the fault certainly did exist and ought to be remedied.

The Jury concurred in the Coroner's opinion, and thus declared their own views:—"That the said premises were accidentally burnt, and that there is no evidence to show that blame is attachable to any one for culpable negligence. The Jury is of opinion that the fire originated in or near the yard at the back of Mr. Figg's premises. And the Jury further say that it is most desirable that efficient arrangements should be made or supplying the Police engine with water on occasions of fire."

Cornwall Insurance Company Engine, Mr Samuel Carvosso in charge. Located in Blyth Street at Carvosso's Coachworks.

Cornwall engine, Mr Pappin in charge

The Imperial, Royal, and Alliance engine with Mr Barlow junior as hoseman

Cornwall Fire and Marine Insurance Company—Abraham Scott, agent in Blyth Street.

SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit

www.fire-brigade.asn.au

10 April 2026