

## Adelaide Fire Brigade 1856

*Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 5 January 1856, page 1*

### THE WATER SUPPLY.

The question of the water supply to the city has been slumbering now for a long time; meanwhile fires have been of frequent occurrence, an atmosphere of dust has almost destroyed the vitality of the respiratory organs, and weary and jaded animals have continued to drag their heavy loads day after day up the steep hill intervening between the Ford and the residences of the citizens. In 1851 the draft of a Bill to establish waterworks was submitted to the Legislative Council. A Select Committee was appointed to consider it, and, their report being unfavourable, it fell through. Since then several abortive attempts have been made to revive the question; but the accomplishment of the project seems to be as far off as ever. In January last a Gazette notice appeared, offering a reward of £500 for the best plans, estimates, and specifications for the water supply and drainage of the city, which were sent in, we believe, by Mr. Perry-man and Mr. Macgeorge; but no action was taken upon them, nor has the premium offered yet been paid. In the speech of His Excellency the Governor on the opening of the present session of the Legislative Council it was intimated that the session would probably not pass without the introduction of a measure for the purpose of supplying the city with water, and for constructing an extensive system of drainage. We have, how-ever, heard nothing about it since, nor do we believe that any such measure will be brought into operation for years to come. The town will probably have been burnt down, or thou-sands of the citizens will have died of consumption or suffocation, before the money is raised and the machinery is organized for a complete system of water supply and drainage. We do not find fault with the Government for wishing to perform a great many great and good things; but we find fault with them for propounding impracticable projects, and re-fusing to confer such a benefit upon the city as they may, simply because they cannot extend the benefit to a point beyond their powers. We think a system of drainage exceedingly desirable and necessary; nay, we think it indispensable to the health of the town community; but because it cannot be accomplished at once, we should think it very unwise to refuse a supply of water to the city which might be obtained in a few weeks. Our objection to the Government plan is, that it is so extensive and costly as to be unrealizable in the present state of the public finances; and also that it contains two proposals which practically neutralize each other, in consequence of its being required that they shall be simultaneously carried out. If we thought the Government the best agents that could be found for prosecuting the work contemplated, we should re-commend them, for the present, to separate the drainage from the water supply, and commence forthwith to bring the water into the heart of the city; but as we think they had much better leave the scheme to private enter-prise, we suggest the propriety of their abandoning it altogether, and calling, not for plans embodying some Utopian ideas, at an expense of £500, but for tenders for the supply of water to the citizens, in such form and in such quantities as may be deemed most expedient and practicable. Presuming that the source of supply must be the Torrens, we believe that comparatively small expense would serve to conduct the water to the Corporation Acre or Victoria-square, where a tank might be constructed to receive it. From thence service pipes might be laid along the principal sheets at leisure. The first object should be to get a plentiful supply of water into the city, with out necessitating the labour, and expense, and delay of sending water-carts to the river for it. This, without any further

step just now, would secure immense advantages to the citizens, in the protection of their property, in the reduction of their insurance and water rates, and in affording them the means of frequent and cheap ablution. We understand that the proprietors of the present water works at the river, Messrs Pybus & Co., would be willing to take the water from the river to North-terrace, supply it there to the water carriers at a price which would enable them to deliver it to their customers considerably cheaper than at present, construct public baths, and make a tank capable of holding 1,000 loads of water, to be kept full night and day, for any emergency, for the sum of £600! For a sum considerably under £3,000, we doubt not that this firm, or some other, would extend these arrangements to the Corporation Acre in King William and Pirie streets. And if so, are the Government, the Corporation, or the citizens justified in delaying for another day the measures necessary for the accomplishment of so desirable an end? We hope this matter will be at once taken up by the ratepayers, and all interested in the welfare of the city. The Government plan will not, cannot, be carried out for a long time to come, whilst a feasible, a speedy, and an economical means of supplying the city with water is available instanter.

***South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Friday 25 January 1856, page 2***

#### WATER AND SEWAGE WORKS.

Mr. Perryman, the City Surveyor, has laid before the Municipal Council his plan for supplying the city with water and carrying off the sewage. The outlines of the former part of the plan we have already given; but in order to do full justice to the scheme we give it in Mr. Perryman's own words: — 'The plan which I have proposed to the City Council for the immediate supply of water to the city is the following:— 'On a spit of ground near the Government Gate, between the roads leading to the Bridge and the City Ford, I propose to erect a strong base of masonry, at an elevation of about 20 feet above Victoria-square, and on this base to erect a number of tanks, of a capacity to contain about 300,000 gallons of water. This would give a supply to all the lower parts of South Adelaide. 'Above these tanks, and about 60 feet above Victoria-square, I propose to erect another set of tanks of similar dimensions. From these all North Adelaide, as well as all the higher parts of South Adelaide could be supplied by mere gravitation, through pipes laid down in the ordinary way, and as proposed by me in my plans now before the Government. 'The pipes, when laid down, to be a portion of a permanent plan or system of waterworks. I also recommend that eventually two sets of mains should thread the city, in each street, for the following reasons: — First, they should be laid under the flagging of the footpaths, and just inside the kerb stone, to prevent the necessity of breaking up the carriageway, for the introduction of service-pipes, which would be of everyday occurrence, and very destructive of macadamized roads; second, as regards repairs, &c, they would be little or no obstruction to traffic or passengers, more easily to come at for repairs, and one-half the size of main pipes would be at present sufficient for the requirements of the city. The other line could be at any other time introduced without affecting the first. The means by which I propose to supply the tanks, as aforesaid, with water, is by a connecting line of pipe with the present waterworks of Pybus & Co., who inform me they could throw to the proposed height 300,000 gallons per day. But, in the event of a failure, I have provided for the erection, near the bank of the river, an engine and works of sufficient power for an ample supply. The aforesaid tanks, &c., when completed, would have the appearance of a handsome tower about 82 feet in height, with a balcony around the same at the height of 60 feet, the whole surmounted by a large fire-bell. The cost of tower and tanks to be about £5,000. 'One other matter I have proposed, which I

conceive to be of vast importance, is a plan to dispose of the sewage water of the entire city (of course supposing that sewers must eventually be constructed), which is to construct in the bed of the River Torrens an iron tube of about 4 feet in diameter, running the whole length of the river from Frome Bridge to the Reedbeds ; and if there were any difficulty in disposing of the sewage matter there, I would take it on to the sea. This might appear, at first, a bold attempt ; but, however expensive it might be, it would have many advantages over any other method for the disposal of refuse than has yet come before the public. First, I apprehend there would be no ground to purchase, or excavations to make. "Second, I would flush or flood the some by means of a dam at its head. "Third, the whole of the Slaughterhouse offal could at once be effectually disposed of, while all the eastern part if the city, as also the Asylum and Hospital, could be effectually drained. The whole tube, complete, would cost about £12,500 per mile. The iron plates could be prepared and fitted in England, numbered and for-warded in portions as required." The proposed plan for carrying off the sewage is rather expensive. The distance by the Torrens from the Frome Bridge to the sea is not less than eight miles, and the sewage pipe, at the rate of £12,500 a mile, would cost £100,000, and this would be entirely exclusive of the cost of constructing sewers in the city. But what necessity is there to go to the expense of carrying all the city sewage away to the Reed-beds or the sea? Anxious as we may be to get it carried out of the city bounds with all convenient speed, this sewage product is not so utterly useless a thing as to be fit for nothing but to be thrown away. On the contrary, it is a most valuable article as manure, and one greatly needed by the agriculturist. If the city sewage could be carried down to some spot a little to the westward of the town, where it could be deodorized, concentrated, and manufactured into some portable inoffensive shape, then farmers and gardeners might conveniently carry it away. It is said, indeed, that no sale would be found for the sewage ; and in proof of this assertion we are told that farmers will not come to the present Slaughter-house to carry off the blood and offal which accumulate there. But this is a very inadequate proof. So long as farmers are troubled with noses, it is not to be wondered at that they should fight shy of the present Slaughterhouse, or that they should decline to spread over their fields and gardens the horrible filth that is obtainable there. But if the sewage were deodorized, as it might be and must be, without impairing its fertilizing qualities, there would be no difficulty in selling it, and that at a good price. It is an acknowledged fact by all the best farmers near Adelaide that a supply of good manure is greatly needed, and that a liberal use of it would greatly add to the profits of agriculture. A proper disposal of the city sewage would supply this want, and transform what is at present noxious to the citizen into a benefit to the farmer. There can hardly be two opinions as to the desirableness of doing this ; the only question is how to effect it without disproportionate expenditure.

***Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Saturday 9 February 1856, page 3***

#### INQUEST ON THE LATE FIRE IN MORPHETT-STREET.

Yesterday afternoon, an inquest was held at the Castle Inn as to the origin of the fire. A jury having been empanelled, and Mr Stewart chosen as foreman, the Coroner, G. Stevenson, Esq., stated the object for which they were called, and then suggested that previous to hearing the evidence, they should proceed to view the premises where the fire occurred. On their return the following evidence was adduced:—

Police-constable R. Everdell stated that he was on duty in Morphett-street on the night of the 5th of this month. It was a very boisterous evening, accompanied by torrents of rain. The storm continued till after mid-night. Shortly before that hour he heard an alarm of fire proceeding from the cooperage shop at the corner. He could not at first distinguish whence the fire came. It was eventually discovered to proceed from Mr Fischers, in Morphett-street. Smoke was at that time visible, but no flames. He could not say who first gave the alarm. He gave the general alarm, and roused up the neighbours. The house was filled with smoke. Mrs Fischer and her children were undressed, and did not know where to go. He sent them to the Castle Inn. The fire was soon subdued by the assistance of the neighbours.

Mr Heed, of the City Bridge Hotel, stated that as soon as he heard the cry of fire he ran out and saw some females screaming in different parts of the street. When he reached the fire there were only about three or four people visible. He kept the front door closed to pre-vent the fire extending. On going round by the back yard, with the assistance of Mr I. Reed and others, he got the fire under, owing to the abundance of the water in the yard. The ladies he saw in the streets were, some of them in white, but he could not say whether they were undressed. When he first went to the house, he did not observe any one endeavouring to extinguish the fire. Mr J. Reed rendered great assistance by dragging the burning material, and throwing it into the water. At the time he arrived, it might have been burning about five minutes.

Isaac Reed, brewer, said that after the thunderstorm, hearing the alarm of fire, he ran out, and observed Mr Heed endeavouring to enter the front door. He ran round to the back. Every thing in the lower story appeared to be on fire. He assisted to put it out. Did not see Mr Fischer, or any of the family whilst so engaged. He heard a report that night, that lightning was the cause of the fire.

Mr Joseph Wing, Morphett-street, said that after the first alarm, he met Mr Fischer and her child in a state of undress. She said the place was on fire. He had since heard that Mr Fischer had taken down a lighted candle, to see if his stock had been damaged by the storm, and that the light communicated with some of the combustible material lying about. As the fire became very fierce in a very short time, he thought only of saving his wife and children.

Mr Augusti Fischer, Upholsterer, said he had occupied his premises in Morphett-street for seven years. He was insured in the Imperial to the amount of £250 for stock-in-trade : also for £100 for the furniture. At the time of the fire his furniture and stack he would value at about £500. He occasionally worked at night when business required it. On those occasions, he used an unprotected candle. His shop would admit a draft. During the night of the fire, hearing the thunder-storm, he got up to see to his stock, as the previous storm had damaged some of it. While engaged in shifting a heap of fibre which had come that afternoon from the gaol, it suddenly fell en masse. The candle was immediately below. The material ignited instanter. He rushed out and raised an alarm, and knocked at the doors of his neighbours. All the straw at present to be observed in the shop was at that time contained in the mattresses.

Mr Fleming confirmed the evidence already given, except as to the first party who saw the fire from with out, and broke open the door and window. As next neighbour, he was the first on the spot. In breaking open the window, he had cut his hands and nose.

The Coroner observed that it was very gratifying to discover the total absence of intention here, although it was certainly very improper on the part of Mr Fischer to have used an unprotected light, under the circumstances, yet there could be no suspicion attached to the Case.

The verdict of the Jury was, " That the fire was purely accidental in its origin. At the same time the Jury would like to express their general feeling on the danger arising from using unguarded lights under any circumstances.

***Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Friday 15 February 1856, page 4***

SALES BY AUCTION.

THIS DAY.

FIRE. FIRE

By Order of the Agents of the Imperial Fire Insurance Company.

SAMSON, WICKSTEED, & CO. are instructed to sell, in the Hall of the Exchange, this day, Friday, February 15, at 11 o'clock—

HALL OF THE EXCHANGE, on a day to be named—

The whole of the STOCK-IN-TRADE, &c., of Mr

Fischer, Upholsterer, Morphett-street, amongst which will be found—

Hair, Wool, Cocoa Fibre, and Straw Mattresses

Straw Palliasses

Feather and Hair Pillows

Bale of Horsehair (slightly damaged) Hemp fibre

Pieces of Tick, Wool, Mattress Binding Paper Hangings, Leather Cart Cushions,

&c., &c., &c.

More or less damaged by fire and water.

N.B.—Some goods are not damaged, otherwise than discoloured by the smoke.

***Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Friday 21 November 1856, page 2***

THE LATE FIRE.

Several matters of recommendation of the jury, who yesterday concluded their investigation into the origin of the late disastrous fire, require careful attention. Taking those recommendations as they stand, we come, in the first place, to a fact which is really surprising. Facilities for obtaining water is, after all, not the greatest desideratum. In many parts of the city, everywhere, where there are buildings with cellars, which was the case at the scene of the late conflagration, water for immediate use, is in existence, eight or nine months out of the twelve. The cellar under Mr. Solomon's store, we learn, was full of the precious fluid. Even, whilst, the fire was crackling and blazing a way above, the means for checking it were lying underneath, but because the engines were not fitted with suitable

pipes, its use was impossible. The firemen, who were aware of this fact, state, that, for want of one load of water, they were obliged to give way, and allow the devouring element to ascend from the low buildings to the high ones ; yet, within a few feet of them, there were loads upon loads of water lying useless, but which could have been used, if pre-cautions, involving only the expenditure of a few pounds, had been taken. How the Insurance offices will explain this we do not know. The next complaint is one equally grave, or even more so, as it shows, that whilst the Corporation have been harrassing the public with outrageously stringent bye-laws, to prevent —as they say—the danger of fire, they are allowing to remain inoperative, a simple regulation, upon which, to a great extent, the safety of a whole city depends. In 1855, the Corporation passed, and caused to be sanctioned, a series of bye-laws, one portion of which was, a regulation to the effect—that all water carriers, should, under a penalty, be compelled to keep their carts full during the nights, and throughout the Sun-days. This bye-law, we say, was passed nearly two years ago, but, from that day to this, it has never been enforced. The danger which gave rise to it, has been ever since increasing, and, according to the statement of Mr Carvosso, the enforcement of the regulation, would, in all probability, have been the means of checking the frightful conflagration, which has just occurred, Yet, beyond the formal passing of that bye-law, no step in the matter has ever been taken. Surely, the Corporation do not suppose that fires and other calamities can be put a stop to by their merely making a regulation, and bringing it up into the Council Chamber. It is the height of folly for them to legislate against wooden buildings, whilst the really useful laws, which they already possess, are allowed to remain in abeyance. Much of the loss and confusion which takes place at fires occuring in the city, arise from the doubt and alarm which prevail concerning the whereabouts of gunpowder. The firemen are intimidated, those willing to assist are kept back, and much property is destroyed, because of the rumour, frequently false, that some of the premises are stored with gunpowder. To remedy this evil, the Jury submit to the authorities, whether a powder-house should not be erected within a convenient distance of the city, and they suggest, that, in the meantime, persons dealing in that dangerous comodity should be compelled to inform the authorities where it is kept, so that no doubt should exist in the case of fire. These suggestions are wise ones, but as neither of them can be carried into effect immediately, we put it earnestly to those who keep gunpowder on their premises, whether it would just tend to their own safety and that of the public, not to wait for the law to compel them, but, at once, to give the information referred to, to the Police authorities. The Act at present in force, we believe, does much more harm than good. By providing, that dealers should keep only one hundred pounds weight of gunpowder on their premises. it drives those who are not very scrupulous, to divide a large quantity into a number of smaller ones, and to place those small quantities in the houses of their friends or workmen. This, we are assured, is a common practice, so that there is probably more gunpowder scattered about the city in fifty-pound parcels than is to be found in the stores of all the dealers. Another point for consideration is the advisability of appointing an officer whose duties should be when a fire occurs, to direct the efforts of the men, and to give such instructions as would best tend to the preservation of property. At present, the want of unity is frequently most disastrous. Orders given by one person are contradicted by another, and even thing is a matter of uncertainty. But whilst the Insurance Companies would probably regard it as an unjust interference to have their servants placed under the control of a public officer, it would, on the other hand, be very doubtful, whether an officer appointed by the Insurance Companies would consider himself

called upon to exert himself in reference to property not insured. At all events, the matter de-serves consideration, some satisfactory arrangement being, no doubt, possible.

A question arose, during yesterday's proceedings, at the Inquest, as to whether it was the province of the Jury to take evidence concerning the amounts of the insurances, and the losses sustained by the persons whose property had been consumed. Their decision was that such questions did not concern them, as they could not affect the origin of the fire. This is, no doubt, very true with regard to the present case, but, as a general rule, we think such matters may be very materially connected with the origin of a fire, and it is, therefore, undesirable, especially when the Jury have not come to a decision, for them to treat the information sought to be elicited by the Insurance Agents, as matters not deserving their attention. In all other respects the onerous labours of the Jury were well directed, and they deserve the thanks of the community for their useful suggestions.

***South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Monday 17 November 1856, page 2***

Destructive Fire. — Yesterday about 1 o'clock a fire broke out in a stable at the back of Lane's Royal Hotel, Hindley-street, which proved to be one of the most alarming and extensive conflagrations that ever occurred in the city. Upon the alarm being given, Mr. Carvosso promptly directed the bell of his establishment to be rung, and the Cornwall fire engine to be removed to the spot where the fire was raging. The flames were at that time confined to the stable; but they so completely possessed the building, that two horses and a valuable retriever dog could not be rescued, and were burnt to death, the next engine arriving was the London Company's, brought up from Messrs. Barlow's manufactory, Hindmarsh-square, by Mr. Rounsevell with surprising speed, and following it were the police engine, Mr. Nitschke's engine; and one belonging to Mr. Magarey. The Cornwall was placed at the back of Gooch's store, but was removed into the street, in a very few minutes, as the heat from the burning buildings was so great as to prevent the men from properly working it and, indeed, caused some damage to the engine itself, but in a part not interfering with its working. The other engines were judiciously placed, were well manned, and did exceedingly good service. The little engine be-longing to Mr. Nitschke was placed in a yard in Leigh street, at the back of Hall's warehouse and the Black Horse Inn, and was vigorously and effectively worked with a supply of water from a well on Mr. Hall's premises. It is worth mentioning that this engine was probably instrumental in preventing the spread of the destructive element further to the east. The supply of water was very good to all the engines during the first ten minutes after their arrival— the good result of the regulation requiring watermen to keep a load in their carts. After this supply had been exhausted, a period of nearly twenty minutes elapsed, during which the flames progressed with fearful activity, and seized upon Peacock's-buildings, a row of two-storey tenements, caught hold on the roof of a large store belonging to the Messrs. Solomon, and subsequently the fire extended to the roof of an adjoining three-storey and yet larger repository of goods. This cessation in the supply was fatal to the safety of one at least of the two last-mentioned buildings, and the mass of valuable goods they contained; and an opinion has been expressed, by an authority competent to judge, that if the first supply had continued for a longer period than the ten minutes only, one-half of the total loss would have been prevented. The water was afterwards brought with great regularity, and the free supply was greatly assisted by the arrangements so praiseworthy made by Mr. Newman to place at the disposal of the Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, Mr. Carvosso, the water-tanks at the Railway Station. This Mr. Newman did after consulting the Superintendent of the Locomotive Department,

Mr. Clark, and the result was that the pumping-engine was set at work, and the supply of the 5,000 gallons raised proved extremely opportune, and, considering the probable circumstances of the case, highly important to the preservation of properties adjoining the scene of the conflagration. Notwithstanding the most active exertions on the part of the police, the military, the fire brigade, and the numerous private individuals who volunteered their assistance, the flames still gained ground, and the wind veering round from north-west to south, assisted to spread the flames. It came lightly from that quarter for some time, and at last completely died away— a circumstance to which very many of the properties in the neighbourhood owe their safety. Some of them, however, ran a narrow chance, and, indeed, several places are stated to have caught fire from burning fragments, mostly corks, which were projected to some distance around, and set on fire the premises of Mr. Carvosso, Mr. Hall's store, Mr. Lambert's old auction room, a part of the premises of the Black Bull Inn, and also a part of those belonging to the Eagle Inn. At all these places the utmost care was taken, and by watchful attention no injury was sustained. For an additional safeguard Mr. Macgeorge's engine was placed so as to be easily available for the extinction of any fire that might be communicated to either of these premises. There was also a slight fire alleged to have occurred in Mr. Lazar's store, but it was also immediately extinguished. In these various places the neighbours evinced the utmost anxiety to assist each other, and many names might be mentioned of persons whose exertions were productive of the best results in the preservation of property. Meanwhile the flames mounted high above the buildings, the roofs fell in, crushing the burning floors down with their superincumbent weight of goods, and reducing the interior of each warehouse to a glowing mass of debris, so intensely hot as to prevent a near approach or a steady gaze. The engines continued to be worked with a will; and, besides the influence thus gained over the flames, a vast number of buckets and ladders were put into requisition, and considerable assistance was thus given. The energy displayed by Mr. Linklater, who stood for an hour in a most dangerous position on a roof adjoining the burning pile, constantly plying the flames with water, was worthy of the highest commendation; and his was not a solitary instance of indefatigable exertion. Among names which must be mentioned are those of Captain Vereker, Inspector Hamilton, Inspector Reid, Sergeant-Major Hall, Sergeant Badman, and there might be given a host of others, who appeared untired in their endeavours to promote order and preserve property. The military rendered good service, but were withdrawn before their services perhaps could be well dispensed with. The police also manifested their ordinary activity, though they did not assemble in their usual numbers, owing, as it was explained to us, to the fact that the bell at the Police Station was out of order, and could not be rung to call the members of the force together. The fire was not mastered till about 5 o'clock, up to which time 500 loads or water had been used. Even then a flame would occasionally break out from a smouldering heap, and it required constant attention to prevent the fire gaining head again. The total damage caused by the conflagration has not yet been estimated, but it has been roughly guessed at over £100,000— a loss distributed among several persons; and it is alleged that only a small portion of that value is covered by insurance. The tenants of Peacock's-buildings are many or them rendered completely destitute by this catastrophe, losing all their furniture and effects in the flames. An instance is related where a poor couple, newly arrived, endeavoured to carry with them their sole property, a bag of flour, but the flames seized on it, and partially destroyed it before they could effect their object. Another circumstances which transpired is also noteworthy:— A little girl, anxious to save her father's property, threw out of the bedroom window all the furniture she could lift, and at

last in throwing out the bed, she fell with it, but fortunately escaped without injury. It is also stated that a cat, having some kittens in the stable where the fire originated, actually jumped into the flames and perished in an attempt to bring them out. During the fire rumours were rife respecting the stores of gunpowder lodged in adjacent premises, and one place belonging to Mr. Harris was looked upon as likely to contain some quantity. An application to Mr. Harris resulted in showing that he had a small quantity, under that allowed by law, in each of his stores, and that was speedily removed to a place of safety. His warehouse was about to be broken open for examination, but Captain Vereker prevented such a proceeding until a Magistrate's order was obtained from Mr. Arthur Hardy for the purpose. Of course, a Coroner's inquest will be held to-day, and then questions will obviously suggest themselves tending to place the matter of the city's safety more prominently before the public. At the late hour of writing this paragraph, arrangements were made for the continued services of 100 men and a number of water-carts, in case the fire broke out afresh.

***Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Friday 21 November 1856, page 3***

#### CORONER'S INQUEST

#### THE LATE DISASTROUS FIRE IN HINDLEY STREET.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20.

The Coroner, Dr H. Chambers, with the Jury, resumed their investigation into the cause of the disastrous conflagration which took place on Sunday last, in Hindley-street. The first witness called was Thomas Lewis, labourer, who said he resided in Peacock's Buildings. About half-past 1, on Sunday last, he saw a man coming down by Lane's public-house. He had a cigar in his mouth. About five minutes afterwards he heard an alarm of fire, and on running down stairs, he saw flames coming from the roof of the open stable. The man with the cigar was on foot. That man was Abel Salter. Had never told the policeman that he saw Salter throw a match on the ground. Mr Cox, shoemaker, said he saw the fire about a quarter past 1 on Sunday afternoon, he heard an alarm of fire, he being in his own house at the time, seven door's from the place on fire. He ran immediately up the yard, when he saw flames issuing either from the top of Slater's room or the stable that George's horse was in. The front part of the stable was all right then. The litter he did not think was burnt. In a very short time, perhaps ten minutes or half-an-hour, Solomon's store caught fire. The horse had then broken its halter. Samuel Carvosso, coach-builder, said, at a quarter past 1 on Sunday, two persons called him to the fire at the back of Solomon's stores. Those persons were Mr P. Solomon and one of witness's men. He set the firebell ringing and then ran to the fire, where he saw one horse dead in the outer stable, and a horse in the near stable was struggling; the roofs of the outer bed-rooms were then perfect, as well as the opposite shed. But, within five minutes, he whole place was on fire. By that time the Cornwall engine was up, but there was no supply of water. If they had had a good supply of water he believed they would have saved the stores; they had five or six loads of water only at that time. For the sake of one load they were driven of the low roof, where they could have kept the fire under. They could not use the water which was lying under the premises, because they had no suction-pipe. There was a large body of water in Mr Solomon's cellar. They had plenty of hose to the engine, but they had no suction-pipe. He believed the water-carriers did not keep their carts full at night time. Had they done so there would have been no lack of water. There was a bye-law in existence to force them to do so, but he did not think it was enforced. The

Railway authorities sent several messages to say water could be obtained there. He thought it would be a good plan at fires if the Police-engine were worked by private persons, and the police allowed to keep order, it was their proper duty to protect property and keep back the crowd. By a Juror—If the companies would agree together, perhaps it would be easier to act under one head than those in charge of the engines now did. The Cornwall engine was at the fire first. Mr Carvosso said the police or some authorised persons ought always to be made acquainted with the situation of powder at fires. There was a great deal of inconvenience arising from ignorance on that subject; people were afraid to assist when they were in doubt as to the position of gunpowder. With regard to the Waterworks, he would mention that Pybus and Turner had more than once refused to supply water. At the fire in question they refused to let a man named Slater have water. By Mr Marks—The instructions given to the enginemen, after the fire, were to remain, and put out all the conflagration that broke out. By Mr Cumming—He believed that the bye-law requiring carts to be full of water was evaded, as there was only six or eight ready when the alarm took place. There were water-carts enough if they were all filled. Mr Botting said the alarm was not sufficient on the south part of the town. Mr Carvosso said no doubt a central bell, and one never used for any other purpose than in cases of fire, would be of great use. The bell he rang himself was the same he used every day when the workmen went to dinner. By the Foreman—When a fire took place he always enquired whether the property was insured, and in what office it was insured. The rule was, to protect all property equally, although, of course, when he was certain that a building in danger was insured in one of his own offices, he exerted himself preferentially in reference to that. Mr Solomon had told witness that he had allowed his insurance to run over two weeks; he did not know whether that referred to all his property. He believed the insurance office supplied Mr Nitschke's engine as well as others. Mr Fox asked the Coroner, if, in his capacity as Insurance Agent, he would be allowed to question the witnesses on any matter relevant to the fire. The Coroner said the object was to elicit evidence, and if Mr Fox could give any, he might be called as a witness. Mr Fox said he had no evidence to give. He was only desirous of procuring all the information that could be obtained, and as the Insurance Agents must be better acquainted with the many circumstances relative to the fire, than any one else, perhaps their questions would elicit many important particulars. It was the Insurance Agents, who, in the first instance, caused those inquests to be held. The Coroner said he had no objection whatever, to any desirable questions being put through the Foreman of the Jury. The Foreman said he should be glad to ask any questions that were suggested to him. Joseph Papian, Blyth-street, said he was an engineer. Heard the fire bell about a quarter past 1 o'clock on Sunday. He went to the back of the Royal Hotel, and saw the Cornwall engine there. He had heard the evidence of the last witness, and could corroborate all he had said about the progress of the fire. Mr Turner came to the fire early on Monday morning, and was then anxious to supply all the water that was required. He believed a large bell in the centre of the town was much required. More suction-pipes would also be an advantage. He agreed with Mr Carvosso, that the water carts could not have been filled on the day of the fire; but the people at the back might not have heard the alarm. The carriers did not object to supply water now that there was a system of giving them a ticket for every load they supplied. There was a packing case in Mr Lazar's warehouse, in which the witness found some fire, and put it out. The packing case had straw in it. Witness could not tell how the fire got in the case, unless it fell through the roof. In a few minutes it would have been fatal. The Coroner remarked, in answer to a juryman, that the enforcement of the bye-law, compelling water-carts to be kept filled, rested with the

Inspectors, who should lay informations against offenders. Wilhelm Nitschke, Rundle-street, said through Mr Jones—that he was at the fire with his engine at half-past 1 o'clock. He had never found any difficulty in getting water, because he had always paid for it. On Sunday last, he got a supply of water after an arrangement with Mr Notham, but he could not get it at first. Mr Notham agreed to pay for the water. He always had a difficulty to get the first load of water, because the carrier, if he gave it to him, would not get the reward. After the first load, the water-carts always served him and the Imperial Insurance Company once paid; but on other occasions they had refused to do so. The Company on that occasion also gave him £5 for his services. Was sometimes refused water by the carts because he could not give them a ticket. His engine threw water sixty-five feet. He did not know whether the Insurance Company would pay for the water he used on the occasion or not. By Mr Fox.—It was Mr Scott who told him that he would never sanction any payment for his engine. Mr Fox explained that the £5 paid to Mr Nitschke, at the Sturt fire, by the Imperial office, was paid on behalf of all the offices. For the future, however, the offices would take care that Mr Nitschke was supplied with tickets the same as other enginemen. The Coroner, at the instance of Mr Fox, here put it to the Jury whether evidence concerning the loss sustained at the fire should be taken or not; and whether, matters relating to insurance should be gone into. The Jury were of opinion that such a question did not come within their province. They had to enquire only with regard to the origin of the fire. George Barlow, jun., engineman, confirmed the evidence of Mr Carvosso, and said the Imperial engine, with which he was connected, was supplied with water as soon as it arrived at the fire. Witness first heard of the fire from a gentleman who came up on horseback. Did not hear any bell before that. The enginemen themselves always heard the whistle at the Waterworks; they could distinguish it from the railway whistle. This being all the evidence to be procured. The Jury, after some consultation, gave their verdict—"That the fire originated in the smaller stable, at the rear of the Royal Hotel, from some accidental cause unknown." The Jury are desirous that the following suggestions should be represented in the proper quarters, in order to produce more efficient exertions in checking the progress of fire for the future. 1st. That it is very desirable that the engines be supplied with longer suction-pipes, in order that the water accumulated in so many of the cellars of the town might be immediately available. 2nd. It would be very desirable that some more efficient means of giving an alarm be established. The Jury would particularly suggest a large alarm bell in a central situation, to be used for no other purpose, and to be kept ringing for at least half an hour. 3rd. That there being great reason to believe that the bye law requiring water-carts to be filled every night, and during Sunday, is frequently evaded, it would be desirable that some officer should frequently make enquiries and inspections to see it such be the case, and that the penalties for omission should be strictly enforced. 4th. That some properly qualified officer should be appointed by the Insurance Companies, or Government, to take the command in case of fire, and give orders for the pulling down of buildings where necessary. 5th. That, as it is highly desirable to prevent unnecessary alarm, the exact locality in which gunpowder is kept should be known, and it is necessary for the safety of the city that a powder magazine be speedily erected in the neighbourhood of the city, in which all dealers in that article should be compelled to keep their stock. 6th. That, in the interim, shopkeepers and others, who deal in gunpowder, should be required to give notice to some authorised person, of the places when their powder is lodged. 7th. That, in cases of fire, the Police should be employed in their proper duties, and not in working the engine, unless in urgent cases. 8th. That, in acknowledging the assistance given by the Railway authorities, in supplying water

from their tank, the Jury are of opinion that the officers in charge of the premises should be instructed in all cases of fire to give every assistance in their power. 9th. The Jury are desirous of recording their conviction of the necessity of measures being adopted to make the removal of all delapidated wooden sheds, and buildings, for the prevention of fires in future, and that increased attention should be paid by the Inspector of Nuisances to that portion of his duty which relates to causing the removal of loose straw and litter.

***Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 22 November 1856, page 3***

#### DESTRUCTIVE FIRE.

On Sunday last, the 16th inst., soon after 1 o'clock a fire broke out in a stable at the back of Lane's Royal Hotel, Hindley-street, which proved to be one of the most alarming and extensive conflagrations that ever occurred in the city. Upon the alarm being given, Mr. Carvosso promptly directed the bell of his establishment to be rang, and the Cornwall fire engine to be removed to the spot where the fire was raging. The flames were at that time confined to the stable; but they so completely possessed the building, that two horses and a valuable retriever dog could not be rescued, and were burnt to death. The next engine arriving was the London Companies', brought from Messrs. Barlow's manufactory, Hindmarsh-square, by Mr. Rounsevell with surprising speed, and following it were the police engine, Mr. Nitschke's engine, and one belonging to Mr. Magarey. The Cornwall was placed at the back of Gooch's store, but was removed into the street in a very few minutes, as the heat from the burning buildings was so great as to prevent the men from properly working it, and, indeed, to damage the engine itself though in a part not interfering with its efficiency. The other engines were judiciously placed, were well manned, and did exceedingly good service. The little engine belonging to Mr. Nitschke, stationed in a yard in Leigh street, between Hall's oil store and the Black Horse Inn, was vigorously and effectively worked with a supply of water from a well on Mr. Hall's premises, and was undoubtedly instrumental in preventing the spread of the destructive element further to the east. The supply of water was very good to all the engines during the first ten minutes after their arrival— the good result of the regulation requiring watermen to keep their carts full. After this supply had been exhausted, a period of nearly twenty minutes elapsed, during which the flames progressed with fearful activity. They seized upon Peacock's-buildings, a row of two-storey tenements, caught the roof of a large store belonging to Messrs. Solomon & Co., and subsequently extended to the roof of the adjoining three-storey warehouse belonging to the same firm, which contained a yet larger quantity of goods. This cessation in the supply was fatal to the safety of one at least of the two last-mentioned buildings, and its valuable contents; and an opinion has been expressed, by an authority competent to judge, that the untoward interruption occasioned fully half the total amount of loss. The water was afterwards brought with great regularity, in consequence, partly, of the arrangements so praiseworthy made by Mr. Newman to place at the disposal of the Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, Mr. Carvosso, the water-tanks at the Railway Station. This Mr. Newman did after consulting the Superintendent of the Locomotive Department, Mr. Clark, and the result was that the pumping-engine was set at work, and the Supply of the 5,000 gallons raised proved extremely opportune. Notwithstanding the most active exertions on the part of the police, the military, the fire brigade, and the numerous private individuals who volunteered their assistance, the flames still increased, and the wind veering round from north-west to south, assisted in spreading them. It blew lightly from that quarter for some time, and at last completely died away—a circumstance to which very many of the properties in the

neighbourhood owe their safety. Some of them, however, ran a narrow chance, and, indeed, several shingle roofs caught fire from burning fragments, mostly corks, which were projected to some distance around. Among the buildings thus endangered were the premises of Mr. Carvosso, Mr. Hall's store, Mr. Lambert's old auction room, the Black Bull Inn, and some outhouses behind the Eagle Inn. At all these places the utmost care was taken, and watchful attention prevented injury. For an additional safeguard Mr. Magarey's engine was so placed as to be easily available in case of need. There was also a slight fire on Mr. Lazar's premises, but it was immediately extinguished. The neighbours evinced the utmost anxiety to assist each other, and many names might be mentioned of persons whose exertions were productive of the best results in the preservation of property. Meanwhile the flames mounted high above the buildings, the roofs fell in, crushing the burning floors down with their superincumbent weight of goods, and reducing the interior of each warehouse to a glowing mass of debris, so intensely hot as to prevent a near approach or a steady gaze. The engines continued to be worked with a will; and, besides the influence thus gained over the flames, a vast number of buckets and ladders were put into requisition, and considerable assistance was thus given. The energy displayed by Mr. Linklater, who stood for an hour in a most dangerous position on a roof adjoining the burning pile, constantly plying the flames with water, is worthy of the highest commendation; and his was not a solitary instance of indefatigable exertion. Captain Vereker, Inspector Hamilton, Inspector Reid, Sergeant-Major Hall, Sergeant Badman, and a host of others, untiring in their endeavours to promote order and preserve property. The military rendered good service, but were withdrawn before they could be well dispensed with. The police manifested much activity, though they did not assemble in their usual numbers, as the bell at the Police-Station was out of order, and could not be rung to call the members of the force together. The fire was not mastered till about 5 o'clock, up to which time 560 loads of water had been used. Even then a flame would occasionally break out from a smouldering heap, and it required constant-attention to prevent the fire gaining head again. The total damage caused by the conflagration has not yet been estimated, but it has been roughly guessed at over £100,000. The loss is distributed among several persons; but it is feared that only a small portion is covered by insurance. The tenants of Peacock's-buildings are many of them rendered completely destitute by the catastrophe, losing all their furniture and effects. One poor couple, newly arrived, endeavoured to carry with them their sole property, a bag of flour, but the flames partially destroyed it before they could effect their object. A little girl, anxious to save her father's property, threw from the bedroom window all the furniture she could lift, and at last in throwing out the bed fell with it, but fortunately escaped without injury. It is also said that a cat, having kittens in the stable where the fire originated, actually jumped into the flames and perished in an attempt to bring them out. During the fire rumours were rife respecting the stores of gunpowder lodged in adjacent premises, and one place belonging to Mr. Harris was looked upon as likely to contain some quantity. It appeared upon enquiry that he had a small quantity, under that allowed by law, in each of his stores, and that was speedily removed to a place of safety.

During the whole of Monday and Tuesday last several hundred-persons visited the scene of the disastrous fire and much sympathy was expressed for the great loss sustained, particularly by the poor persons who inhabited Peacock's-buildings. An abundant supply of water, brought in carts, enabled the Cornwall engine to be worked throughout the day and the whole of the night of Monday, and on Tuesday the same precautions were taken to prevent the breaking out again of the fire.

An inquest upon the fire has since been held, the particulars of which will be found in another part of the paper.

***South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Wednesday 26 November 1856, page 2***

#### PRECAUTIONS AGAINST FIRE.

It is to be hoped that the warning of the late fire will not be permitted to pass away without leading to some practical measures that may suffice to avert such calamities in future. There is a frequent tendency in human nature to throw off the responsibilities which are pointed out in common calamities, and rather, to rejoice that a great disaster is survived than to adopt measures to prevent its recurrence; but as the danger to which we are exposed by fire is no remote contingency, but a peril ever near at hand, and from which we are never secure, it is incumbent upon every enlightened citizen to apply such rules and regulations as wisdom and experience may suggest for the safety of the community. If fires in crowded cities jeopardized only property, their prevention or non-prevention would be a simple question of commercial expediency ; but as life and limb are equally imperilled, the prevention of fires is a question not only of trade and business, but of humanity. We are, therefore, bound to do everything in our power to diminish the risk of fires, and to extinguish them speedily should they, notwithstanding, occur. The whole subject must be looked at from two points of view — the prevention of fires, and the extinction of fires. And both moieties of our social duty in regard to this matter must be discharged simultaneously. Whilst we provide means for the speedy extinguishing of fires, we must also devise plans for rendering such destructive visitations less and less frequent. In reference to the latter portion of our duty, we are glad to see that the Corporation of Adelaide are actively exerting themselves with a view to the conservation of the safety of the city. Should the Legislative Council agree to the short measure now submitted by the Corporation the era of wooden sheds and shingle roofs in Adelaide will soon terminate. We published the Corporation clauses in our impression of yesterday, and may here briefly state that the Bill is intended to prohibit all wooden structures or wooden roofs being erected henceforward in the City of Adelaide, to provide means for the removal of such as have been already built, and, generally, to regulate the storage of hay, straw, and other combustible materials. The Corporation ask for power to award reasonable compensation to parties who may already be in occupation of buildings of the class prohibited by the Act; and, as this power will doubtless be conferred upon them, we see no reason why a Committee of Inspection should not be formed to divide the city into districts, and to report upon all the dangerous buildings and erections to be found within its limits. A few thousands spent in moderate compensation may save many thousand pounds worth of valuable property, and may also save still more valuable lives. But whilst inflammable buildings are in process of removal, and even after they are all removed, there will still be risk of fire, and therefore the necessity of providing means for extinguishing it is indisputable. We need scarcely stay to reason upon the impropriety of waiting until the great waterworks scheme of the Government is carried out. Before the fire-plugs are fixed in the streets of Adelaide half the city may be in ashes. Something must be done immediately, and if it be not the best thing in the world, let it be the best thing we can attain unto. The supply of water is the first consideration, the conditions of an effective supply being promptness, permanency, and sufficiency. Although the supply of water at the recent fire has been made by some the occasion of censure, yet on the whole we think but little more could have been done. But granting that the water supply at the late fire was everything that could be desired, there is no guarantee, on the

principle at present adopted, that an equally good supply would be forthcoming to-morrow should a fire break out. There is too much left to the chapter of accidents. The Town Council intend to enforce more rigorously the By-law which requires water-carts to be kept full at night, and so far the precaution is wise. But it is not sufficient. As each cart is emptied the necessity arises of going to a considerable distance, along a bad road, for a renewed supply ; and it often occurs that after the exhaustion of the first supply of water several minutes elapse before the second supply begins to arrive. In these critical minutes the flames acquire the ascendancy. It is, in short, indispensably necessary to have a reservoir of water in town ; or, better still, to have two reservoirs. If we had two such tanks or cisterns located in central positions, and kept continually full of water, there would never, under proper regulations, be any outcry about the difficulty of obtaining water, or about its being refused when application was made for it. We are given to understand that the railway authorities, by co-operating with the Corporation, might, at a comparatively trifling expense, pump up, by steam power, an illimitable supply of water to any two central reservoirs in the city. It is to be hoped that the City Council and the Government will enter into an immediate communication on a question of so very much importance to the entire community. In connection with fires the relation of the insurance offices and of the police force to the public is of very great interest. Eighteen months ago there were some highly dangerous fires in Rundle-street, on which occasion the representatives of the Imperial, Alliance, Royal, and Cornwall Insurance Offices had some correspondence with Major Warburton relative to the duty of the police at fires. The gentlemen representing these offices on that occasion suggested that a Superintendent of Fires should be appointed, with authority, in cases of fire, to decide upon what buildings should be pulled down to cut off communication, and that the losses incurred by those necessary acts of demolition should be defrayed either out of the general revenue, or out of a rate levied on the city or town in which the conflagration occurred. Were such an officer appointed, the representatives of the four offices declared themselves willing to place under his entire control the whole of their engines and firemen. It was also suggested that if a proper fire brigade were established the police might be much more usefully employed in keeping order, guarding property, and preserving an open space for the Fire Brigade to work in, than by working the engines themselves. The same document suggested that until a Superintendent of Fires was appointed, any Magistrate, or superior officer of police present at a fire, should be supported by the Government in assuming for the time being the functions and authorities of the proposed officer. On the 20th of July, 1855, the same offices, through their agents, memorialized the Colonial Secretary for the appointment of an officer in some such capacity as that just alluded to, offering to pay a portion of his salary. The Companies at the same time represented that the expense of working the engines was very heavy ; and that as they were very frequently required to extinguish fires on property not insured, the outlay on such occasions ought to be borne by the Corporation or by the Government. The Colonial Secretary replied a few days afterwards, remarking that without legislation it would be impossible for the Government to concede the requests of the Insurance Companies, and that the best remedy was the water supply by Act of Council. On the 9th of August following the representatives of the four offices again addressed the Colonial Secretary, and we extract from the letter the sub-joined paragraph : — "Referring to future expenses at fires, we are bound to state that the four offices we represent cannot justly be expected to defray all the cost of protecting the city while there are three other Fire Offices doing business here from whom we get no assistance, besides a great amount of uninsured property, the owners of which never

contribute. It is clearly our duty, as agents, to study primarily the interests of the offices we represent, and experience induces us to think it might pay them better to leave the city totally unprotected, and simply pay the losses occurring on property insured by us, rather than defray, as we have done hitherto, the whole cost of protecting property, the majority of which is either uninsured or covered in other offices.

On the basis of these arguments the representatives of the four offices in question desired to have an interview with His Excellency, in order personally to explain the advantages that would result from the organization of a proper fire brigade, as a department of public service. The Colonial Secretary replied, on behalf of the Governor, on the 30th of the same month, the decision of His Excellency being that the maintenance of a fire brigade should devolve upon the Corporation and not upon the Government. In this position, as respects the Fire Offices and the Government, the matter, we believe, still rests. The correspondence to which we have here briefly adverted has been placed at our disposal by the agent of one of the four offices, who has also forwarded us the following letter in reference to the late calamitous fire in Hindley-street:— "TO THE EDITOR OF THE REGISTER. "Sir— In connection with the fires which have occurred at various times in the city of Adelaide, there is one circumstance I cannot help adverting to, namely, the strange view the public appear to take of the responsibilities of Insurance Offices. Notwithstanding the numerous difficulties under which they labour in their efforts to extinguish fire, they too often meet with blame for a state of things for which the citizens themselves are entirely responsible. It is patent to every one that but a small proportion of the property in Adelaide is insured, yet we are expected to bear the cost of protecting the entire town. Contrast the means for extinguishing fires supplied by some of the offices with those furnished by the authorities, and how uneven is the comparison. "In London there are upwards of 300 parochial engines, besides those belonging to barracks, police-stations, hospitals, and public buildings; whilst the Fire Brigade maintained by Insurance Companies numbers but thirty engines. When a fire breaks out water is at once obtained free of charge and boundless in supply, whilst volunteers crowd to the engine pumps but too eager to offer their unpaid services. The entire direction is taken by Mr. Braidwood, Superintendent of the Brigade. "Since November, 1852. when our first serious fire occurred, our efforts have been unceasing to keep before the public the fearful risk that must attach to a city into the construction of which so large a proportion of wood enters. At the present time, though four years have elapsed since the note of warning was first founded, and notwithstanding the destructive fires that have taken place in the interval, there is nothing to pre-vent Adelaide from sharing the fate of Charleston, New Orleans, or San Francisco ; and during the past month a number of our citizens have actually at the commencement of the dry season endeavoured to arrest the course of city improvement. Were the same zeal shown in a contrary direction, how speedy and effectual would the work of improvement be. Had not the weather been calm on Sunday last, who will venture to say where desolation would have ended? No human power could have enabled us with present appliances to cope with three or four fires in different places. Even the last desperate resource in such a case is beyond our reach for want of a proper city powder magazine. "Let us, however, hope that the public mind is now aroused. The cost of compensation necessary to sweep away the wooden buildings which invite destruction is but a drop in the ocean compared to the ruin they may one day bring on us. A Building Act has been drawn up, and only needs the sanction of the Legislature, to provide for a more rational style of buildings in future. The subject is a most important one for the people of Adelaide, and in their hands I now leave it.

Yours, &c, "A. J. Wright, "Agent Imperial Fire Office. "Adelaide, 22nd November, 1856."

We shall not, at present, comment upon the allegation of public apathy contained in this letter, but there is no doubt that hundreds of persons are always to be found ready and willing to aid in extinguishing fires in England, without any expectation or wish for reward.

***Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Monday 1 December 1856, page 2***

WATER SUPPLY.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir—We beg to propose a new scheme for extinguish-ing fires, which, without any further comment thereon, we at once submit. We propose fitting force-pumps to six portable tanks on springs, like those we now use for watering Hindley 8street, with sixty or seventy feet of indiarubber hose to each tank. These portable tanks are to be kept stationed, say one at the Victoria, and another at the Exchange Hotels, in Hindley-street; two in King William-street, at the City Arms and Southern Cross; and two in Rundle-street, at the Globe and Plough and Harrow. A light ladder, sufficiently long for any story building, is to be kept at each station; and, on the alarm being given, half-a-dozen men will be sufficient to take the ladder and one of the tanks to the fire, with its contents of water, at a moment's notice, and directly on arriving at the fire, the man with the ladder ascends with the hose thereon to the building, if necessary and immediately the pump is put in motion plays the water accordingly. The contents of each tank is 180 gallons, or, the whole of the six tanks, 1,080 gallons, and when properly conducted the whole of the water could be applied to the fire within twenty minutes from the alarm being given. By this time a further supply of water has arrived by the ordinary water-carts, and if the Insurances' fire engines have not arrived, still these pumps can continue to be worked if required, or till the fire-engines arrive. We would further propose that the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd portable tanks would claim a premium as an inducement to encourage any person to rush at once, when the alarm is given, to the various stations, and convey the tanks to the fire, to that half the premium is divided between the men who convey the said tanks and the proprietors. The scheme has originated solely with us, and we are prepared to carry it out at once, providing any encouragement and remuneration are given us by the Insurance Companies, Government, or Corporation.

We we, Sir, yours, &c., PYBUS & TURNER. Waterworks, Adelaide, Nov. 29, 1856.

***Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), Saturday 13 December 1856, page 2***

PROTECTION FROM FIRE.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir—With considerable surprise have I read, in the Register of the 1st of December, an article about a proposed method of " Extinguishing fires," signed Pybus and Turner. Those gentlemen propose to introduce an invention of their own, and solely their own, i. e., to construct portable waterworks, to which are attached one or more force-pumps. The undersigned believes that the public in general, and the agents for the Insurance Companies more particularly, have often had an opportunity of seeing my portable tanks, with force pumps, in action. I hardly deem it necessary to mention that, at the great fires at the Sturt stables, Gooch's stores, &c.. &c., one of my engines arrived at the spot filled with water, and ready for immediate action. The facts will show you that I have made, for years past, good

use of an invention only lately taken up by Messrs Pybus and Turner. The only difference between Pybus and Turner's pumps and my own appears to be, that they intend to construct pumps, which they mean to use only, until the engines of the Companies are ready for work ; whereas my engines, the sizes being compared, render no less service than those of the Companies.

My opinion, for years past, has been that many fires might have been suppressed much more effectually, with less cost and in less time, had the engines been enabled to commence work immediately after their arrival at the scene of conflagration. Usually, at the commencement, the want of hands is seriously felt, because it requires a great many men to keep the heavy engines of the companies in action ; and, after a full complement of hands has arrived, there is certainly a want of supply of water, a great quantity of water being requisite to fill the long and thick hose. A plain standing tube would, in most instances, prove more effectual than this heavy and clumsy hose.

The undersigned is ready, should he be assisted by the Corporation or the Insurance Companies to a reasonable extent, to construct a strong engine, which may be moved and worked by a few men, and to keep the same continually filled with 180 gallons of water, which may be discharged, in five minutes, in any direction, to a distance of 80 feet in height, thus to subdue the flames without waiting for the arrival of ladders and other tools. No one can doubt that 180 gallons of water immediately after the breaking out of a fire, and judiciously applied to the proper quarter, will be of more use, and more effectually stop the progress of the devouring element, than all the engines are able to do, after half an hour to one hour has been spent in getting them to work.

An energetic management of the hands employed is principally necessary for the quick and effective suppression of a fire. Some time ago, attention was called to the fact that a fire could have been suppressed quicker if an experienced man had concentrated his force upon one and the same point. I would propose to select six or more experienced men, as a Fire Company, who shall choose amongst themselves a foreman to superintend the working. The engines, water-carts, and men are under his command. The members of the Companies, who shall be distinguished by a badge or otherwise, assist the Superintendent in the conscientious execution of his orders. Such a Fire Committee would require the authority of the Corporation or the Government.

Water is naturally the first and greatest requisite The Committee should therefore have the power to cause every householder, and especially every store-keeper, to keep continually, in all seasons, day and night, one or more casks filled with water, on his premises, according to the combustibility of the buildings and their contents. One or more buckets, a ladder, and a long pole to which is attached a large rag, are also great requisites. Such arrangements being made, a few engines worked by few men only, would certainly prevent the return of such disastrous conflagrations in Adelaide

I remain, Sir, yours, &c.,

WILLIAM NITSCHKE, Rundle-street.