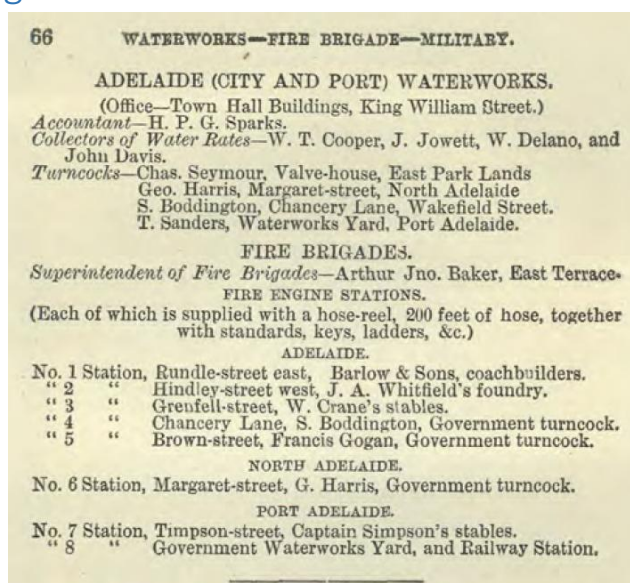


## Adelaide Fire Brigade 1870



*Boothby Almanac, Town and Country Directory and guide to South Australia for 1870*

*Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Monday 31 January 1870, page 2*

### GENERAL NEWS.

On Saturday evening, about 6 o'clock, the chimney flue of an office in Rundle-street, occupied by Mr. C. Schilling, caught fire, and the flames which issued caused considerable alarm. No. 3 reel of the Fire Brigade soon arrived, but its services were not required.

*Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Friday 18 February 1870, page 2*

### Latest News

FIRE IN KING WILLIAM STREET.—On Friday morning, February 18, shortly after 11, smoke was seen issuing from the eastern end of the hay-loft, over a stable at the rear of the premises occupied by Mr. Killicoat, butcher. The main building facing King William-street south, which is two storey, substantially built of stone, and slate roofed, remains intact and uninjured, but behind the stable, a place used for trade purposes, and a small kitchen, more slightly constructed, have been gutted. In the incovered loft there was a quantity of hay, and the fire having originated there, by what means is not known, created dense clouds of smoke, which covered several acres, and attracted hundreds of people. Messengers were at once dispatched to the Superintendent of Fire Brigades, who, however, having, we are sorry to learn, met with an accident, and broken one or two ribs, was, of course, unable to attend. At 11.25 Boddington's Reel No. 5, from Chancery-lane, arrived, and after some little confusion and delay, apparently resulting from the unavoidable absence of the directing head on these occasions, was brought into play, and the value of an abundant supply of high pressure water was soon evident. The most easterly building having been deluged, No. 6 Reel (Logan's), came next, and speedily poured a stream on the roof of the lower building between the dwelling-house and stable. Here the fire had spread, and was difficult to dislodge, as the old shingle roof having been covered with galvanized iron was playing fiercely underneath the outer covering. A plucky fellow, whose energy was highly

commendable, wrenched off the sheets and laid bare one side, so that there was no difficulty in subduing the flames. Nos. 3 and 1 Reels next came, but their services were not required. Adjoining the premises burnt is a long shop, wood covered, which had a narrow escape ; and within a very short distance there is a wilderness of wooden shanties, which, had flames been plentiful and water scanty, would have crackled and blazed rapidly. Thanks, however, to the activity of brigade men, bystanders, and favouring circumstances, the danger on elements was pent up in a small area and quickly subdued. The premises are insured in the South Australian Office, but the claim will be small, and certainly will not affect the next dividend.

***Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Friday 18 February 1870, page 2***

GENERAL NEWS.

On Friday morning, February 19, about 11 o'clock, a fire broke out on the premises of Mr. Killicoat, butcher, King William street, south. It originated in the hayloft of a stable, in which there was a considerable quantity of hay, which was consumed. Soon after the fire commenced Reel No. 5 was upon the ground, and subsequently Reels Nos. 6, 3, and 1 arrived in the order in which they are given. The flames were quickly extinguished. The roof of the stable was destroyed, and the upper part of the masonry greatly damaged. Nothing is known as to the origin of the fire. The property belongs to Mr. Michell, and is insured in the South Australian Insurance Office. We understand that the reason the Superintendent of Fire Brigades (Mr. A. J. Baker) was not at the fire was that he is confined to his house by illness.

***South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Tuesday 1 March 1870, page 4***

THE MONTH'S NEWS.

Fire Prevention. — The Adelaide Fire Brigade was called out for practice at 6 a.m. on February 28 near Mr. A. J. Baker's house, on East-terrace. The Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and 13 firemen were present at the appointed time, and Nos. 1 and 2, drawn by horses, had arrived ; 3 was in dock for repairs on account of an accident to its wheels ; 4 was at North Adelaide, and had not been ordered over ; 5 (Government engine) was at the rear of the Treasury Buildings ; and 6, another Ministerial reel, was also absent ; while 7 remained at its station in Fisher-place, behind Messrs. Wills & Co.'s warehouse. The horses were dispatched for Nos. 6 and 7 reels, and in the meantime the men were practised in the use of scaling ladders. It may here be noted that the Government reels were absent, it is believed mainly from the fact that they require two men to work them, whereas the Executive only appoint one— the turncock — and no Government buildings being insured, the Brigade do not feel disposed to go out of their way to supply the omission. The reels belonging to the Government are not, therefore, much used, and the turncocks not undergoing drill would be at a fire in the public buildings, compared with those who regularly go through their facings, of far less service. When the four engines were on the ground men were told off to work them, and each reel was placed at a plug. The order was given that on the first sound of the whistle they were to exchange places, run off 120 feet of hose, put down the stand-pipe, attach the hose and branch pipes, and turn on water as soon as ready. No. 2 was the first in full operation. The workers started from their station at the fire-plug at the lower end of Wakefield-street, ran to one on East-terrace, near Flinders-street, and had all in order in a minute and a half ; in fact, the whole number were in full

play in less than two minutes. Some of the men were new to the job, this being their first public practice ; but the proceedings were creditable to the men as a body. If the Government will second the efforts of the Insurance Companies by paying men to work their reels, the full advantages of our high-pressure water supply can be made use of and the greatest efficiency secured, so that almost any fire in Adelaide may be successfully coped with.

***South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Friday 18 March 1870, page 2***

TOPICS OF THE DAY

On Friday morning, about 1.40, a fire occurred at the shop of Mr. Dixon, shoemaker, Hindley-street. Smoke was discovered by Mrs. Whyte, who immediately aroused her son, who gave the alarm. Nos. 2 and 7 reels, with the Superintendent of Fire Brigades, were on the spot in a few minutes, and the fire was soon got under. The police on the beat were instrumental in saving property by keeping the doors closed. The mastery over the fire was so quietly and speedily effected, that very few even of the neighbors were aware of what was going on. The books were all saved. We understand the stock is insured in the Imperial Office for £1,000.

***Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Saturday 19 March 1870, page 2***

CORONERS' INQUEST.

Mr. T. Ward, J.P., held an inquest on Saturday morning at the Adelaide Hotel, Hindley-street, to enquire into the origin of a fire which took place early on Friday morning, on the premises of Mr. Dixon, bootmaker, of Hindley-street. Messrs. James T. Turnbull and E. W. Wright were present, representing the Imperial Insurance Company. Mr. J. Allen, chemist, was foreman of the Jury. John Mee, police-constable, deposed to being on duty in Hindley-street on the 18th instant, and passing Mr. Dixon's shop about 20 minutes past 1 in the morning saw evidences of fire from his shop. Gave an alarm, and sent for a reel. Knocked up Mr. Dixon, who answered him from the back, and did not keep him long. Told him there was a fire on his premises. He said "My God." The fire was seen through the parlor glass door burning in the front shop. Mr. Dixon wanted to open the door and get water, but he would not allow him, as he thought it best to keep the fire confined. Did not see any other person when he called Dixon up, but about a quarter of an hour afterwards saw a young female. By the foreman—Mr. Dixon had his shirt and trowsers on. Could not get at his front door. Water was taken through the passage. By a Juror—He appeared as if he had been to bed. Had a candle. By the Coroner— Mr. Dixon must have passed through the back room if he had been upstairs to bed before to let witness in. He (witness) first spoke of the fire. There was a good deal of light from it when he first went in.

By Mr. Turnbull—About 1.20, saw no smoke, but smelt tar. Tried both Dixon and Wight's door. Could not say if there was an opening in Dixon's shutters. The outer back door was a glass. Did not hear Dixon come home. Did not see a light until the outer door was opened. By the Foreman—Did not observe any smoke or smell in his back parlour. By the Coroner— Had removed the rubbish in the corner of the shop where the fire was suppose to have originated, but found nothing but part of a box of burnt, boots and shoes, and saw no sign of matches. There was a bundle of cotton laces in the box. William Alexander Wight, grocer, whose shop adjoined Mr. Dixon's, deposed that he was sleeping on his premises on Thursday night, and was awake about 2 o'clock in the morning by his mother. On entering

her room found it full of smoke and very hot. Gave the alarm, and found the first witness outside. The smoke appeared to come from the west end of his verandah. As he went out Mr. Dixon opened the outer door, and came through. Saw the fire in his shop. Dixon had nothing but his shirt on. In answer to his enquiry, he said the girl was sleeping upstairs, and he told him to fetch her. Mrs. Dixon was sleeping away from the house that night. The Coroner said that he thought it but right to allow Mr. Dixon to be present when evidence which might tend to cast suspicion upon him was given, and he therefore instructed the constable to call him in, and informed him that he would be allowed to question the witnesses through the Coroner. Witness resumed—And said to Drew if he had slept upstairs must have come through the parlour to have opened the door for the constable. Mr. Dixon appeared in a very excited state, as if he did not know what he was doing. He made some such acclamation as "Oh, my God, I shall be ruined—My little all is destroyed." Thought he could have seen the fire before he opened the door. Did not know if Dixon had been in bed. He told him two or three minutes before 12 o'clock that he was going to bed. There was a strong smell of fire in the back parlour when he went in. His mother smelt smoke in her room. It was like the smell of gutta-percha. The smoke came rolling through the window. There was an immense light in the back parlour one or two minutes after the constable first called him. It was a light moonlight night. It was as bright inside as out, only a different shade. Knew there was a large stock. That same night had asked Dixon if he had renewed his insurance. He replied, "Yes." In reply to Mr. Dixon he said the conversation as to insurance arose in this manner:—After taking his wife home he went to Mr. Dixon's shop—that was 11 o'clock, and Dixon held the candle while he went into the shop to get some medicine. He said he never took a light into the shop for fear of fire, and that led to his asking Dixon if he had renewed his insurance. When he left—a few minutes to 12—there was no sign of fire or smoke. Dixon did not go into the shop while he was there. Arthur John Baker, Superintendent of Fire Brigade, said he was called at five minutes to 2 o'clock, and he arrived at the scene of the fire at about 12 minutes past 2. The No. 7 and No. 2 reels were on the spot, and the fire out. Could form no opinion as to how the fire occurred. There was intense heat in the shop when he got there. There was nothing to show why there should have been such great heat. It appeared that whatever the fire was was very intense and very quick. Did not think boots, and shoes, and goloshes would cause such intense heat. It was very difficult for boots and shoes to burn quickly. Shortly after the enquiry was adjourned till 2 o'clock.

***Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Monday 21 March 1870, page 2***

#### INQUEST ON A FIRE IN HINDLEY STREET.

On Saturday, March 19, Mr. T. Ward, J.P., held an inquest at the Adelaide Hotel for the purpose of enquiring into the origin of a fire which broke out in Mr. W. Dixon's boot and shoe shop, Hindley-street, at about 1.45 on Friday morning last. Mr. James T. Turnbull was present for the purpose of watching the proceedings on behalf of the Insurance Companies concerned. Mr. James Allen was appointed foreman of the Jury. Throughout the enquiry Mr. Dixon was present, and by the permission of the Coroner, allowed to put questions to any of the witnesses. The enquiry was very lengthy, lasting from 9.30 a.m. till 5.30 p.m. with an intermission of an hour and a-half in the middle of the day. John Mee, police-constable, stated that he was on duty in Hindley-street, on the morning in question, and saw the appearance of a fire coming from Mr. Dixon's shop. Sent for a reel, and knocked up Mr. Dixon. The fire was seen burning in the shop through the glass door of the parlor. Although

Mr. Dixon wanted to open the door and pour some water on the fire, witness would not allow him, as he thought it would be wise to keep the fire confined. At the time he aroused Mr. Dixon there was no one about. By the jury—Mr. Dixon had his shirt and trousers on, and he had apparently been in bed. By the Coroner—Mr. Dixon must have passed through the back room if he came down the stairs from bed to let witness in. Witness spoke first about the fire, and there was a strong light proceeding from it when he first entered the house. By Mr. Turnbull—Saw no smoke at about half-past 1, although he smelt tar. Could not state whether there was an opening in Dixon's shutters or not. The outer back door was of glass, but he did not see the glare of the fire until the outer door was opened. By the Foreman—Did not notice any smoke or smell anything peculiar when he went in the back parlor. By the Coroner—Had examined the corner of the shop where the fire was supposed to have originated, and had taken away some rubbish. The only thing found was a portion of the burnt trunk of boots and shoes, which also contained a bundle of cotton laces, but there was no sign of any matches.

W. A. Wight deposed that on Friday morning, the 18th instant, about 2 o'clock, he was sleeping on his premises in Hindley-street, At that time he was called by his mother. He went into her room, which was full of smoke and steam, which was coming along the top of the verandah. It seemed to be coming from the west end of the verandah. He went down-stairs and found the constable at the door. He said the fire was in Dixon's. When Dixon's door was opened he could see the fire was in the shop, as it threw a strong light into the parlor. He sent Mr. Dixon upstairs to bring the servant girl down. She came down, and he sent her up into his house to his mother.

Mr. Dixon was very excited ; he seemed to be quite bewildered. He thought Dixon must have seen the light as he came down to open the back door. By the Foreman—There is a curtain across the window and also a blind. He thought the blind was up that night. By Mr. Turnbull—He did not smell any smoke until his mother called him, and then he thought it was like the smell of burning goloshes or india-rubber of some kind. His mother's room was full of smoke. That room faces the street. There was a good large stock in the shop. Dixon had told him he was insured, but did not say what amount. He thought he was doing a good business. Mr. Dixon was not in his shop while witness was there.

Arthur John Baker, Superintendent of Fire Brigade, saw the fire yesterday morning. He was called at five minutes to 2, and arrived at the scene of the fire at 12 minutes past 2. No. 2 and No. 7 reels were on the spot, and the fire was out. He could not give any reason as to its origin, although he was so quickly on the spot. By Mr. Turnbull—The goloshes and tarred canvas would cause a large flame and a great deal of smoke. He thought there were two or three shelves burned down.

Louisa Young said, that Mr. Dixon woke her up on the night in question, telling her to get up as the shop was on fire. Was very much frightened, and had to be brought down. Went into Mr. Wight's house to dress. Had lived with Mr. Dixon as his servant for three months, and had never heard Mr. or Mrs. Dixon talking about leaving the colony. The corner in which the fire broke out had always held two cases of boots, with newspaper lying on the top of them. Had not noticed any person removing goods from that corner. Could not imagine how the fire was caused, as Mr. and Mrs. Dixon and herself were most careful about the manner in which they used lights. By the Jury—There was smoke in her room. Mr. Dixon shut the shop at 8 o'clock, and re-turned home about half-past 10. Always stayed in the shop alone after

her master and mistress had gone to the Bay, where they occasionally remained all night. It was about half-past 11 when witness went to bed on the evening before the fire. Mr. Dixon did not go into his shop after he came home, at least she did not see him. He could not have gone into the shop without her knowledge. Mr. Dixon always closed the shop himself. Never heard her master say he had lost money. By Mr. Turnbull—The only goods she saw come in—that was spirits, or beer—was a cask of bottled beer, and a case of bottled brandy, and they were usually kept in the cupboard under the stairs. As soon as the cases were empty they were used as fire wood. The only light used that night was a candle which she took with her when she went to bed. When she retired for the night she left an unlit candle on the corner of the sit-ting-room table for her master's use when he went to bed. Never used a kerosine lamp.

No combustible article was kept in the corner where the fire broke out. William Dixon, shoemaker, said that on Friday morning last he heard a noise at his back door, and being uncertain where it proceeded from he raised the window and heard the word "fire." He ran down stair's after having hastily dressed himself and saw fire proceeding from his shop. It was proposed to throw water on it, and witness ran to the tap and filled a bucket. Did not throw any water on the fire himself, because some one took the bucket from him and threw the water under the door. Mr. Chittleborough arrived shortly after with a hose, and witness assisted him with it until the fire was put out. Had not the slightest idea as to the manner in which the fire occurred. Always kept oil to put on the boots above the place where the fire broke out. Did not keep oily rags on the shelf where the fire commenced, but there was a piece of flannel there which used to oil patent leather boots. By the Jury—Was insured for £1,000 with the Imperial Insurance Company for his stock of boots and shoes in Hindley-street. Was not and never had been insured in any other office. A young man who served in the shop smoked ; but he went away at half-past 6. The last time he (witness) took stock he had £1,300 worth, and that was the lowest amount he had had in for years. The bulk of the stock was in the shop ; but he could not say how much it was worth. Kept safety matches on the premises. By Mr. Turnbull— There was more stock upstairs two months ago than there was then. Did not look into the shop before going to bed. Should have seen fire had there been any, as the door leading to the shop had several panes of glass in it. Took a lighted candle with him when he went to bed. Thought it was four or five weeks ago that a case of brandy came into his house. By the Jury—Was in a solvent state. There was only a little due on the stock, but £250 would pay off all his debts. Should not have owed anything had it not been on account of having recently purchased some property, which ran him out of ready money.

The Coroner, in summing up, pointed out that the origin of the fire was enveloped in mystery. It was very extraordinary that the first witness, Constable Mee, should discover the fire before Dixon, but it was for them to consider the evidence, and return a verdict in accordance with it. The room was then cleared, and the Jury, after an hour's deliberation, returned the following verdict:—"The Jury are of unanimous opinion that the fire was wilfully made by William Dixon. Mr. Dixon wanted to question the Jury as to the grounds on which they had arrived at their verdict, but the Coroner would not permit him to do so and he was then arrested at the instigation of Mr. Turnbull on the charge of arson.

***South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Thursday 14 April 1870, page 6***

FIRE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION.

SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit

[www.fire-brigade.asn.au](http://www.fire-brigade.asn.au)

12 April 2026

On Wednesday, April 13, the quarterly meeting of the South Australian Fire Brigade Association took place at the offices of the Adelaide Marine and Fire Assurance Company, Grenfell-street. Mr. E. W. Wright, Chairman of the Association, presided, and there were also present the following gentlemen, representing respectively the Companies following their names:— R. E. Tapley (South Australian), L. A. Jeasop (Queen), A. Abrahams (Equitable), P. Wells (Australasian), W. Shoobridge, for Messrs. Acraman, Main, & Co. (Royal), C. L. Meyer (Northern), H. Scott (Cornwall), A. S. Clark (Australian Alliance), Mr. A. J. Baker, Superintendent of Brigades, Mr. J. T. Turn-bull, Valuator, and Mr. E. M. Ashwin, Secretary. Mr. Wright represented the Imperial Insurance Company.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.** The Superintendent in his report mentioned that the fire brigades had been called out to nine fires in the city and two in Port Adelaide, six of them being chimney fires; that all the 450 foot of 2½-inch hose-pipes had been tried at the Government yards, and were in good working order; and that the Government had supplied two hand-reels, with 240 feet of hose, to be placed under his superintendence. On the motion of Mr. Percy Wells, seconded by Mr. Abrahams, the report was received and adopted.

**STORAGE OF INFLAMMABLE COMPOUNDS.** The Committee appointed at the last meeting reported as follows : — "Your Committee have to report that they met Mr. A. J. Wright, and had a long conference with him. "That the result of their enquiries showed that large quantities of inflammable compounds were stored in the Town and Port stores. "That a Corporation By-law exists, prohibiting the storage of such articles, but it had become a dead letter owing to the want of power to enter upon premises; and your Committee, with the assistance of the Fire Brigade solicitors, drew up certain alterations and amendments which were deemed desirable. "Your Committee then waited upon His Worship the Mayor of Adelaide, who expressed his approval of the proposed alterations, and promised his support in Council, and his assistance in getting a clause inserted giving the power of entry. "Your Committee also received a memorial from the men of the Fire Brigade, pointing out the great danger to which they were thus exposed in the execution of their duties, and expressing a hope that steps would be at once taken to remove dangerous compounds from buildings in the city. "This document was forwarded to His Worship, who informed us that owing to the dissolution of Parliament nothing further could at present be done. "Your Committee having corresponded with Mr. Wright in Melbourne as to the manner in which the difficulty regarding entry is overcome there, are informed by him that any act in contravention of the By-law is looked upon as a dangerous nuisance, and is treated accordingly. But he suggested that the difficulty might be easily overcome by the insertion of an advertisement, signed by the agents of the different offices, to the effect that any person would vitiate his policy by storing any combustibles in contravention of the By-laws. He also informs us that even in stores set apart for the storage of dangerous compounds the rate is £3 3s. per cent. "That with regard to the storage of dangerous compounds at Port Adelaide, and of timber on the wharfs there, the Port Corporation be waited on, and requested to adopt the By-law of the city so soon as passed, and at the same time they be requested to pass a By-law regulating the storage of timber on the wharfs, with a view to prevent a fire breaking out in either stores, timber, or shipping communicating with all three. "Your Committee had several applications for the appointment of Sub-Superintendent of Brigades at the Port, and have to report having selected for the office Mr. Robt. Reade, late Inspector of Police. On the motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Henry Scott, the report was adopted. Mr. Wells then proposed that the Committee be requested to draw up an advertisement for signature by the agents of the various Com-panics, in accordance with the recommendation of the

Committee. Mr. Abrahams thought there should be some restriction as to quantity. Mr. Driffield would point out that the advertisement was only a temporary measure, as they hoped with the efforts of the Mayor to get a new By-law, which would render anything else unnecessary. It was suggested that the present By-law, or an extract from it, should be included in the advertisement ; but that was left to the Committee, and the motion carried.

PROSECUTION FOR ARSON. The Chairman said that a meeting was recently held at Mr. Turnbull's office for the purpose of considering the question of arson in relation to one or two cases which had recently occurred. [The Secretary here read the minutes of the meeting, though he pointed out it was not a meeting of the Association]. Mr. Driffield said the consequence of that meeting was the appointment of a deputation, consisting of Mr. J. Acraman, Mr. E. W. Wright, and himself, to wait upon the Government. He then read their report, as follows:— "Adelaide, April 8, 1870. "The deputation appointed to wait upon the Government respecting the recent cases of arson beg to report as follows:— "That, as instructed, they first requested an interview with the Attorney-General, but he declined to receive them; they then applied to the Chief Secretary, who appointed a time and received them courteously. "The deputation then pointed out to the Chief Secretary that, during the month of March last, two verdicts of arson (as popularly so called) against individuals had been brought in by Coroner's Juries, and yet the police had brought up no one on that charge. "That the Coroner, in both these cases, was under the erroneous impression that he had not power to commit, or he would have done so, and that the Juries naturally feel aggrieved that their time should have been wasted and their verdicts treated with contempt. "That on communicating with the Commissioner of Police the deputation were informed that the law officers of the Crown were of opinion that there was not sufficient evidence to convict, and that the police in consequence decline to prosecute. "The deputation then respectfully submitted to the Chief Secretary that, in their opinion, it was not within the province of the police to determine whether there is evidence to convict, but think it is their bounden duty to arrest any such supposed offender, and to leave it to the Police Magistrate to determine whether there is evidence enough or otherwise. "That arson being such a difficult crime to bring home, it is very rarely that such strong verdicts are found by the Juries, consequently it is of vital importance to sift such cases as these to the uttermost; and whether conviction did or not ensue, such examination would act as a great deterrent. In nearly all cases of fire the inquests are very hurriedly got up, there being little time for the police-constable to collect evidence, even supposing him to be sufficiently intelligent in all cases for this particular office. "The Chief Secretary, in reply to these statements, said : — "That as the Coroner did not convict when the Jury gave their verdict, the non-arrest of the suspected parties rested with the Coroner and not with the police, and that it was the duty of the police before prosecuting in such a case to lay the matter before the law officers of the Crown, and ascertain whether there was any chance of a conviction. "That it is quite competent for any one even now to swear an information against the parties, which would be the simplest plan for those interested to adopt. "That if they prefer to take up all the evidence they can get together on the subject, and submit it to the law officers, he will undertake that the matter shall again be looked into, and that if there is a probability of conviction the police will prosecute. "The deputation regret they are unable to report more satisfactorily on their interview with the Government. The only deductions they can draw are that the Government do not consider the crime of arson of sufficient importance to require the prompt measures that would be taken with almost any other crime. "It would appear from their argument that any one may commit arson, and leisurely

leave the colony, while the police are obtaining the opinion of the law officers of the Crown as to his probable conviction in case they should use the power vested in them by the Police Act— for it can hardly be supposed that they would arrest any one on the statement of one or two individuals when they decline to act on the solemn charge of a sworn Jury of twelve citizens. "It would seem that they consider the private opinion of the law officers of the Crown is of more value and importance than would be the decision, publicly expressed, of the Police Magistrate. "It must further be inferred that if officers interested wish to bring home this crime, it is for them, and not the police, to act as detectives and get up the evidence, notwithstanding that they run the risk of being mulcted in heavy damages for non-conviction, while the police run no such risk, and are, besides, paid to do this sort of work." As one of the deputation, he was prepared to move, as a resolution: — "That inasmuch as ample provision is made by the Bush Fire's Act for the repression of the crime of arson, by placing it on exactly the same footing as murder and manslaughter, and the fullest power to arrest is conferred by the new Police Act upon the police, and yet no action is taken to bring offenders to justice, it is desirable to memorialize Parliament to take such steps as they may deem desirable to repress the growing crime of arson." Mr. R. E. Tapley seconded. A desultory discussion ensued, in the course of which Mr. Scott objected to the resolution as self-contradictory, and urged that a memorial should rather be presented to the Government, but the majority considered that after what had already taken place that could be of no use, and that the best way was to appeal to the fountain-head. An amendment, proposed by Mr. Scott, and seconded by Mr. Meyer, was negatived, and the resolution carried, with the substitution for the last few words "repress the growing crime of arson" of the following: — "To have the laws referred to carried into effect." In connection with the same subject a com-plaint was made by Mr. Turnbull that on its being required not a single copy of the Police Act was to be found at the Station; but after some discussion the meeting considered it was not a matter in which they could interfere. One or two other matters of routine were considered, and the following members of the Association were appointed a Standing Committee:— Messrs. E. W. Wright, F. S. C. Driffield, R. E. Tapley, J. Acraman, and A. S. Clark.

***Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Saturday 10 December 1870, page 3***

**FIRE IN KING WILLIAM-STREET.**

On Friday evening, 9th. December, great excitement was occasioned by a fire in the central portion of the city — an occurrence that is fortunately rare in Adelaide. Shortly before half-past 8 o'clock Detective Doyle, who was standing in King William-street, was alarmed by some of the cabmen on the stand calling "fire," and on going over to the National Bank he observed a light like a candle in a small window in the northern wall of the premises occupied by the Adelaide Photographic Company, and immediately over Messrs. Townsend, Botting, & Co.'s store. The alarm was at once given, and the various firereels were sent for. The nearest to the scene of the fire—Mr. Crane's—was first on this ground, and soon after the Superintendent of Fire Brigades (Mr. A. J. Baker) arrived. Before long Mr. Chittleborough's and Barlow's reel also came up, the former being stationed in Gresham-street so as to play from behind, and, directed by Mr. Chittleborough, continued to pour a stream of water steadily into the middle of the building till the fire was got completely under; and the latter in King William-street with Crane's, which began to throw water on the fire at about 20 minutes to 9 o'clock. At this time the flames had gained possession of the whole of the northern part of the upper storey. It soon, also, extended itself to the southern

portion, over Messrs. Clarkson & Co.'s clothing establishment, which is also occupied by the Company. Great difficulty was experienced in forcing the water up to the height required from the front, and some delay was caused in the attempt to make the hose more serviceable. About a quarter to 9 a good jet of water was thrown from the back, and immediately after the playing was recommenced from the front, and continued for a few minutes. At this point Mr. Baker, after trying one or two other methods, broke through the front of the building, taking a hose up with him, which, with the water from Gresham-street, was in the course of a short time the means of doing effectual service. At about 9 o'clock there were signs of the flames being conquered. At a quarter-past the only evidence of the catastrophe was the smoke which arose from the smouldering window-frames and other debris, and at half-past the conflagration was completely extinguished. The loss to the Photographic Company will be a very severe one, as the operating-rooms, to which, however, the fire was fortunately confined, are entirely gutted, and the stock of negatives, chemicals, &c., thoroughly destroyed. Although the building, which belongs to the Hon. J. B. Neales, is insured, the stock is not. As we have said, the fire did not extend below, but the ground-floors were saturated with water, which has necessarily done great damage. The stock of Messrs. Clarkson & Co. next door, which is insured for £1,500, is by this means completely damaged, but the books and cash were saved. There is not the slightest clue to the origin of the fire, the building having been left an hour and a quarter before the flames were discovered, and no one having been in the operating room for some time previous. If it had spread any further than it did the consequences would have been most serious, as the book warehouse of Messrs. Platts & Co., the auction mart of Messrs. Townsend, Botting, & Co., and other large houses, were in close proximity, and it would be impossible to calculate the danger from the conflagration of such a pile of buildings. The attendance of spectators to witness such an unusual sight as that presented was very large.

***Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Tuesday 13 December 1870, page 3***

#### THE RECENT FIRE IN KING WILLIAM-STREET.

#### INQUEST AT THE EXCHANGE HOTEL.

On Tuesday morning, December 13, His Worship the Mayor (Mr. J. M. Solomon) held an inquest at the Exchange Hotel, Hindley-street, to enquire into the circumstances attending the fire which occurred on the Adelaide Photographic Company's premises on Friday night last. Mr. J. T. Turnbull was present to watch the proceedings on behalf of the Northern Insurance Company, for £1,000 on Fischer's stock; for the Equitable, £1,500 on Clarkson's stock; also, for the South Australian, Adelaide Marine and Fire, Australasian, and Royal Companies, interested in insurances on Townsend, Botting, and Co.'s stock. A Jury of thirteen having been sworn, and Mr. Wm. Scott chosen Foreman, the premises were viewed, and the following evidence taken :—

Thomas Harvey, laborer, said on Friday night last, as nearly as he could tell, about 20 minutes past 8 o'clock, whilst coming up the eastern side of King William-street, he saw a light in a window over Townsend & Co.'s Auction Mart. At first it looked like a candle glare, but it suddenly broke out into a flame. Said to some cabmen "I think that is a fire over there" Went over to the door of the premises on fire, and thought he could smell something as if gas was escaping. He knocked and kicked the door two or three times without receiving any reply from the inside. He then run for a policeman, and saw Detective Doyle in Hindley-street, and they went back together to the premises. Doyle kicked the Company's door, and

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also knocked at Clarkson's, Some one came out of the latter place and the detective spoke to him. Then went down Hindley-street to get a reel, but the keeper had got previous information of the fire. By the Foreman—There was no light observable in the lower portion of the premises.

It was found that Detective Doyle had gone into the country, so that his evidence was not procurable. P.C. Henry Sayers said—On Friday evening last, from 20 minutes to 8 o'clock to 20 minutes past 8, he was on duty at Government gate. He noticed a light in the northern window at the top of the Adelaide Photographic Company's building, which looked like a strong gaslight shining through a yellow blind. A minute afterwards it broke into a flame outside the window. Ran across, and saw two or three people knocking at the door. Went for Crane's reel, which was sent down at once, and then proceeded to the Police Station to report the fire. On his return the fire was coming out of the eastern as well as the northern windows. The Fire Brigade was present. Hose had been attached to the pipes, and water was being thrown on the fire. By a juror—Did not observe whether the window was open or not.

Edward Lear, French-polisher, Adelaide, said on Friday evening about 8 or 20 minutes past he was at work in Mr. Clarkson's shop in King William-street, when some persons knocked at the door or shutters and called out "fire," Opened the shutters used as a door as soon as he could, and another man came in and said, "We'll see whether it is up stairs." When he opened the door he saw the flames coming through the window in the narrow passage leading into Hindley-street. Went and informed Mr. Clark that there was a fire adjoining his premises, and he returned with witness, and the reels were then playing, or shortly afterwards played on the fire. They were in front of the building in King William-street, and were playing over the window on fire. Was there till the fire was put out. By the Foreman—The window from which he saw the flames issuing was one overlooking Townsend and Co.'s auction mart. The water did not reach the top window in front when he saw it.

Thomas Pardey, storeman, Rundle-street, said about 25-minutes past 8 o'clock, hearing an alarm of "fire," he and Detective Doyle went across and knocked at the Photographic Company's door, and also at Clarkson's. The door of Clarkson's premises was opened by the last witness. Told him he thought there was a fire in the building, and they would like to see where it was. Opened the back door and saw flames coming from the Photographic Company's top window, overlooking Townsend's mart. Assisted in get-ting Clarkson's books out, but did not touch the stock. Delivered the books to Mr. Clark, and stopped there till the fire was put out. The water came down through the ceiling as through a cullender, and also down the stairs. Turned off the gas at the main. Tried to get upstairs, but could not for some time on account of the water. The upstairs room was all right. The stove in that room was perfectly clear. Saw Mr. Clark hand over his keys to Inspector Bee.

John Alfred Upton, artist, in the employ of the Photographic Company, said he left the premises about 10 minutes after 7 o'clock on Friday night, which was about an hour and a half subsequent to any one else being there. His duties confined him to that portion of the top floor which had not been injured by the fire. He was engaged in the studio. Had no light and did not smoke. Went from the studio into the operating room passing through it to the staircase. Did not pass the front windows to reach the staircase. The chemicals, he believed, were principally kept in the dark room where he washed his hands. Had no lucifers in his pockets. There were some possibly in the rooms. Gas was not laid on to the premises, which he locked up, and left the key at Faulding's. Heard of the fire from a cabman, who drove to

his house in Kent Town about 9 o'clock. At once proceeded to Norwood to inform Mr. Davis, the manager. He was not at home. Then came to town, and on his arrival at the fire it was nearly extinguished. By the Jury—Could not say whether the window facing north was open when he left.

Henry Davis, photographer, one of the proprietors of the business known as the Adelaide Photographic Company, stated that he left the premises at 5 o'clock on Friday evening. At three minutes past 8. o'clock he was in front of the National Bank, waiting for a North Adelaide car. There was then no appearance of fire; neither did he see any on his way to North Adelaide. Remained at North Adelaide till 9.45, and on his way to the cab-stand there was informed of the fire. On reaching the premises the fire had been extinguished. The stock was not insured. It was insured till about six weeks ago when the policy was allowed to lapse. Did not enter the premises after 5 o'clock before the occurrence of the fire. They had gun-cotton stored in glass-stopper bottles in the dark room. There were perhaps six or eight ounces. Did not think it was at all probable the fire had its origin in the gun cotton, which was stored near the ceiling. It was quite possible that if there had been a fire in Clarkson's chimney, sparks might have entered the ventilator. Had never seen sparks enter, but they had been greatly troubled with smut. It was also possible a light might have been left in the printer's dark room, and not have been seen by Mr. Upton. Where the fire was first seen was where it would have begun had it been caused by sparks from Clark son's chimney.

Alfred Vaughan, photographic painter in the employ of the Adelaide Photographic Company, said he was at work on their premises on Friday last. Left at 20 minutes past 5 o'clock. Was at work in the paint-room, which was on the north side of the building. Used a lighted candle during the day, but one was not used in his presence after a quarter to 12 o'clock. Was in the room at quarter-past 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when there was no candle burning, and no signs of fire. Had seen pieces of cloth, which might or might not have been alight, fall on Messrs. Townsend, Botting, & Co.'s Auction Mart roof, and on the board outside the window facing north. Pictures had been spoiled by the falling pieces.

Elliott Coppin, photographic operator, said he was at work on the premises during the day in question. Left at 20 minutes to 6 o'clock, at which time there was no smell or sign of fire. The candle alluded to by the previous witness, had been re-lit. There was a candle alight at 4 o'clock, which witness blew out, at the same time censuring the assistant for keeping it burning after it was not wanted. The boy left before witness. The ventilator had been open all day and was open when he left. By Jury—A person getting on the top of the roof could put a light into the ventilator. Was in the habit of smoking a pipe, but did not smoke that day.

John Gibson, clerk, said he was present at the fire on Friday night last. Saw flames issuing from the northern window over-looking Townsend's mart. Went round to the back, got a ladder and rope and looked in at the window and saw a camera on fire that was fixed in the small window. Threw a rope out into the street, and asked the firemen to attach a hose, but this they would not do. If it had been done he could have put the fire out in 10 minutes. Thought there was danger to Mr. Townsend's premises, because the burning wood was falling on that side. Witness mounted Townsend's roof, and threw pieces of burning wood into the street. Tried to save the camera, but could not.

John Clark said he left his premises at 12 minutes to 8 o'clock, for the purpose of attending to some private business. He left the polisher in charge until he should return. The workmen

engaged upstairs remained till about 10 minutes past 7 o'clock. Every day they had a fire in the stove in that room. At five minutes past 7 o'clock he went to the workroom, took down some clothing which had been finished, and examined the stove according to his usual custom, and found no fire there. The witness then detailed his actions in connection with the fire, By the Jury—Used coals in the stove. Used colonial coal, and this would account for the events as described by previous witnesses. In answer to Mr. Turnbull, witness said rags were used for kindling in the morning, but were not put in afterwards. By a juror—Carted away his waste woollens, and had used them for manuring his orange trees, they retaining the water better than anything else. This was the whole of the evidence.

The Coroner briefly summed up, and the jury, after 10 minutes' consideration, returned the following verdict:—"The jury are of opinion that the fire originated in the north east room of the Photographic Company's establishment, but they have no evidence to show how it originated."

***Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Tuesday 13 December 1870, page 3***

THE FIRE BRIGADE.

[From the Register.]

The risk of accident from fire is one of the inseparable conditions of civilization. It increases almost in geometrical progression with increased density of population, and in large towns it becomes an incessant source of apprehension. No one who has resided in one of the crowded cities of the old country can fail to recal the precautions habitually taken in the household, or the rigid search which any unusual "smell of fire" called forth. With increased danger has generally grown up increased means of confronting it. The admirable system of organization first established by Mr. Braidwood in Edinburgh more than forty years ago, under the joint auspices of the Municipal authorities and the Insurance Companies, has now been introduced into most of the great English towns. It was carried to a wonderful pitch of excellence by Mr. Braidwood himself when he became Superintendent of the London Fire Brigade. Since his death at the great fire at Cotton's Wharf in 1861, at which three millions' worth of property was destroyed, when the sudden falling of a wall crushed him beneath its ruins, the London Brigade has been rendered even more powerful an arm against the common enemy. In 1866 it was placed under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan Board of Works; a grant of £10,000 from the public purse was made towards its expenses by way of payment for the protection it afforded to public property. A further sum was raised by rates levied throughout the whole of the large area under the Board's supervision, and the Insurance Companies also contributed sums in proportion to the amount of their business. Similar organizations exist elsewhere, and as a general rule, the importance of establishing and maintaining them is one of the recognised duties of the State or the Municipality. It is only in South Australia that these authorities turn a deaf ear to the demand for such assistance, and complacently leave all the contingencies of danger to life and property from fire to be provided for by those whose personal interest in the property they actually protect is wholly disproportioned to its extent and value. The Adelaide Insurance Offices have long felt this injustice, and recently their diminishing profits and the increasing expense of their Brigade have forced it more strongly upon their notice. Accordingly on Friday, the 9th instant, a deputation waited upon the Chief Secretary, and urged the claims of the Fire Brigade to assistance from the Government and the Municipality in a memorial, of which the following is a copy:— "The Memorial of the undermentioned

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Fire Insurance Companies, doing business in Adelaide through their respective agents, respectfully showeth— "That they have at considerable cost to themselves formed a Brigade Association for the protection of the City and Port of Adelaide. "That the cost of these Brigades at first did not exceed £450 a year; but to render them efficient for the protection of buildings so scattered as are the houses in the City and Port, it has been found necessary to add to them yearly, until the cost now reaches about £1,100 per annum. "That your memorialists find by experience that property-holders in many instances use the efficiency of the Brigade as an argument for reducing or discontinuing their insurance, so that a twofold loss is experienced by the offices, viz., extra cost and reduction of premiums. "That a continual expense is thrown upon the Brigade by chimney fires, each of which costs the Brigade £5 at least. "That in addition to the very large amount of uninsured private property, the Government buildings, which must represent at least £150,000, are wholly uninsured, whilst both have the advantage of the protection afforded by the Brigade. "That the Government take the fines and fees levied on chimney fires, though the Brigade extinguish them. "That the small amount that can be recovered from either the Government or private uninsured persons on the occasion of a fire is only a repayment of the expense incurred, but is no contribution towards the maintenance of the Brigade that perhaps saved the property from total destruction. "That some years since it was found by the Insurance Offices that the burden of protecting the City of London, much of which was uninsured, became so heavy a tax on them that they determined to disband the Brigades unless Government would step in to assist. Accordingly, in 1865 an arrangement was made by which Government took the Brigade in hand, placed it under the Board of Works, and contributed £10,000 a year as their share of the cost of protecting Government buildings. The Fire Offices agreed to pay £35 for every million of property they insured, and a rate of a halfpenny in the pound was agreed to be levied upon the inhabitants for the same purpose. "That, as in London, the Fire Offices here which instituted the Brigade for the protection of insured property, find that it is impossible to distinguish between what is insured and uninsured, and they have really become the protectors of all alike whether insured or not, and that the cost has become so great, when compared with the amount received in premium, that they must of necessity reduce the cost, and in doing so the efficient protection the Brigade now gives to all parts of the city. "That before, however, taking such a step, your memorialists beg to suggest that Government should (as is done in London) contribute a sum, say £250, towards this expense; and also should, through the Corporation, arrange to levy a rate of say a halfpenny in the pound upon all property. "That the amount thus contributed would not place the Insurance Companies in the same favourable position as in London, but it would so far reduce the cost to them that they would be prepared to continue to maintain the Brigade in its present efficient state. "That in London 20s. is the fine for permitting a chimney to take fire; here, where the danger is much greater from this neglect, 5s. is considered sufficient." It will be seen that this memorial, after pointing out that the expenses of the Brigade have gradually grown from £450 to £1,100 a year, prays that the Government will contribute £250 annually towards this amount, and arrange with the Corporation for the levy of a halfpenny rate for a similar purpose. The simple grounds upon which this claim is based are that the Brigade is not only available for protecting, but does actually protect the Government property and a large proportion of city property, neither of which pay anything in the way of insurance. We are surprised to learn that the deputation met with a very discouraging reception. Not only was all assistance refused, but the services of the Brigade itself were disparaged; and we are credibly informed that the Chief Secretary curtly intimated that if

the Government Buildings were on fire he didn't care whether the Brigade came to put them out or not. We do not know whether this indifference arose from want of appreciation of the Brigade's services, or from a feeling akin to that of the phlegmatic philosopher who would not trouble himself about the house being on fire because he was "only a lodger;" but we question if the public at large would tolerate the spectacle of, let us say, Government House in a blaze, with Mr. A. J. Baker and his men with their reels and hose all standing idle in the front, even though they could plead the express authority of the Chief Secretary for their inaction. There is another class of the uninsured who see no reason why they should not enjoy the benefits of the protection afforded by the Brigade without paying for it. They selfishly urge that the Insurance Companies keep up the Brigade for the protection of their own interests, and they would lose more than it costs them by its abolition. Nay, some of them will even aver, with a ludicrous perversion of language, that it is the duty of the Insurance Companies to maintain the Brigade. The position of the Insurance Companies, however, is a very simple one. For an annual amount paid to them they undertake to make good any losses by fire to the extent of an agreed sum. So long as they make such losses good when they occur their duty is fully discharged. They are no more called upon by the terms of their contract to stop the progress of a fire than they are to send round every night and see that all fires and candles are properly extinguished. There is no doubt that they have hitherto maintained the Brigade for the protection of their own interests, but, nevertheless, they have always rendered cheerful and often invaluable assistance when there was no question of their interests being involved at all. Yet now the very security which they have thus created is pleaded by the parsimonious as a ground for decreasing or discontinuing their insurance. It has thus become a serious question with them, as the above memorial indicates, whether they would not really be better off if they did not burden themselves with the heavy expenses of the Brigade. There can be little question that but for its exertions a few nights ago the whole corner block between Hindley and King William streets would have been destroyed. So disastrous a fire would no doubt have startled a large number of people into at once effecting new insurances, or renewing those which their feeling of security has induced them to abandon. The proposal of the memorial offers assuredly the cheapest mode of retaining this security that can be devised. A rate of a halfpenny in the pound is a very small outlay for any uninsured citizen who wishes to have the protection of an experienced Superintendent, a well-drilled body of courageous men, and the tools and appliances under their control, in the event of his place taking fire; while £250 for ensuring the like protection to the £150,000 worth of Government property in the city is assuredly as little as could reasonably be expected. The amount contributed by the English Insurance Companies towards the maintenance of the London Brigade is £35 in the million. The amount the local Companies would contribute in the event of their proposal being acceded to would even then be over £400 in the million. There is another aspect of the matter which, as the population of the city increases, will become of greater importance. We refer to the protection which the Brigade will practically afford to life as well as property. Happily our city fires have hitherto been unattended with the horror of helpless sufferers perishing in the flames, but with the lapse of years we cannot hope always to enjoy the same immunity from such scenes. In these cases prompt and skilled assistance is everything, and even for this consideration alone it would be folly to reject the proposal to keep up the Brigade. With the growth of the city the force would doubtless increase by degrees both in strength and in means of usefulness, and become as valuable an institution as are the kindred organizations of other cities. At the present moment the Government and the Corporation together pay

over £7,000 a year for the protection of life and property from knavery and violence. Is it unreasonable to ask for a poor £500 for protection from the yet more insidious attacks of fire?

***South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1868 - 1881), Saturday 18 December 1875, page 17***

#### THE FIRE BRIGADE.

On Monday morning a deputation, consisting of Messrs. R. E. Tapley, E. W. Wright, E. M. Ashwin, J. G. Boothby, L. A. Jessop, A. S. Clark, C. L. Meyer, J. Beck, and J. Gooch, waited upon the Chief Secretary (Hon. W. Morgan) with reference to the continued support of the Fire Brigade in the City of Adelaide. Mr. Wright pointed out that up to the present time the agents of the Fire Insurance Companies had been obliged to bear the whole expense of the Brigade, but that expense had so greatly increased of late years, compared with what it used to be, that they felt they could no longer bear the sole expense of the Brigade ; and as numerous applications to the Government and the Corporation had failed in their object, they were now discussing the question whether they should not at once throw the onus upon the Corporation of Adelaide of protecting the city, and thus leave the city in the same position as the outside towns. Whilst protection had been afforded to the citizens against other calamities, this, the greatest one of all, appeared to have been entirely overlooked, and the whole duty of protecting the city had been left to the Insurance offices. During the Russian war when it was anticipated that a visit from a Russian man-of-war might occur, the Government went to a considerable expense in arming the people, but although a cruiser could easily have set fire to Port Adelaide, no protection against such a danger was afforded. About that time the value of the property in Adelaide was about £300,000, and it was under the protection of the police. In 1847 the rates of premium, averaged 36s. 3d. per cent. of the value of property ; in 1861, in consequence of the improvements made the rates had fallen to 12s. 7d. per cent., while at the present time in 1875 they had been still further reduced to 8s. 3½d. The amount of property protected, and which was entirely protected by the Insurance Companies was about £6,000,000, and the expenditure on the Brigade amounted to about a thousand a year, and sometimes more. This was exclusive of the amounts paid for services at fires. The nature of the improvements made had been such that instead of people insuring a considerable amount at high rates of premium it was the case that a person having property to the value of £1,000 would only insure to the amount of £200 or £300, so that the premiums they got were really insufficient to cover the cost of the Brigade. In 1851 the Government property likely to take fire was nil, with the exception of Government House, while at the present time the value at the least was £500,000, and this, he believed, was a very low estimate. The Government did not insure, and accordingly they did not pay a penny towards the expense of protecting their buildings from fire. About four years ago the Companies made application to the Government for assistance, and the House all but agreed to give them £400 a year, but one unfortunate member— (laughter)— he believed it was Mr. Barrow, induced the members to think otherwise, so they lost the money. He pointed out that there were gas and water rates in the City of Adelaide, and he thought there could be no harm in their asking for a rate for protection from fire. In London the expenses of the fire brigades became so great that the Insurance Companies determined to continue it no longer, and in 1865 the Government took the matter in hand, and contributed £10,000 a year, and the Corporation levied a rate of a halfpenny in the pound. The amount thus gained was found to be insufficient, and the amount now annually

expended in London was about £120,000. Of that amount the Corporation made an assessment of  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound, the Insurance offices contributed £20,000, and the Government made up the remainder, On the Continent of Europe they found that in all cases the Corporation of the Government protected the cities throughout, and in America it was a Corporation affair altogether, and they had magnificent Brigades ; but notwithstanding that, they knew the fate of Chicago and Boston. In Quebec he saw the same thing whilst he was there. The protection of the city was in the hands of the Corporation. (Hear, hear.) They thought they had a right to expect the Government to look at fire as an enemy to be provided against in the same way as fever or burglary, or any other evil that came upon them. What they proposed was that the Government should assist them in thirds ; that where a Corporation raised one pound, the Government should come in with another, and the Insurance Companies with a third.

Mr. CLARK said the manner in which the offices had exerted themselves had induced a reduction of rates on account of the small number of losses, and it had lately been a question whether it would not pay the offices better to do away with the Brigade altogether, and by thus increasing the danger from fire materially increase the rates of premium. Mr. Wright said he had forgotten to mention that in Liverpool the whole duty of protecting the town was undertaken by the Corporation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY in reply, said he would ask Mr. Wright to furnish him with the figures he had used in writing, so that he might have something to lay before his colleagues. He would also like to have a statement of the practices in all the different towns in England and America. When he had this before him he would be able to lay the whole matter before his colleagues. He might say, that he felt that there was a good deal in what had been said that day, but there was this to be said in favor of Adelaide as against America ; that the fires in America had, to a great extent been caused by curious circumstances, which did not exist in Adelaide. Then he pointed out that the Government had provided an efficient water supply for the city, which, though it was paid for, did not yield them any profit. The Government would care-fully consider the matter, and a reply should be forwarded to the deputation. The deputation then withdrew.

***South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1868 - 1881), Saturday 31 December 1870, page 12***

#### THE FIRE BRIGADE.

Whatever charges of inefficiency may be brought against the Fire Brigade, one thing is certain—since their establishment in Adelaide no fire has continued to burn more than an hour. Now, we think this is greatly to their credit. Of course, they have all the advantages that a good supply of water at high pressure gives ; but the water without skill to use it would be of little avail. We suppose it may be laid down as a fact that, under the present arrangements, a long-continued and destructive fire in Adelaide is almost an impossibility. The pressure of water is so great that it only needs to be properly applied to overcome the greatest fire in a short time. We wonder how many of our readers know that the Fire Brigade is entirely supported by the Insurance Companies. Such, however, is the fact. The whole safety of the city from fire is de-pendent on the precautions of the Insurance Companies. Neither the general public nor the Government contribute towards the support of the Brigade. Of course, it will be said that the Companies have the greatest interest in keeping down fires, which is quite true. Without their appliances they might suffer serious

losses. But the Government insure none of their buildings, and yet, we suppose, they would expect the services of the Brigade in the event of a fire breaking out ; and, therefore, it would seem to be only fair that they should contribute something for the protection of the public property. We understand that they re-fuse to do so, on the ground that it is the business of the Companies to protect the city from fire. Recently a deputation from the various offices waited upon the Chief Secretary with the subjoined memorial, but we are informed they were but coldly received. We are not prepared to say that all they ask for ought to be at once granted ; but it will be admitted that they have made out a fair case for assistance from the Government. Either the Government ought to provide reels and men to work them, for the protection of their own property, or they ought to give some assistance to the Companies in their heavy expenses for keeping up the Brigade. With these remarks, we now allow the Companies to plead their own cause, and give their memorial addressed to the Government :—

"The memorial of the undermentioned Fire Insurance Companies doing business in respectfully showeth— "That they have at considerable cost to them-selves formed a Brigade Association for the protection of the City and Port of Adelaide. "That the cost of these Brigades at first did not exceed £450 a year, but to render them efficient for the protection of buildings so scattered as are the houses in the City and Port, it has been found necessary to add to them yearly, until the cost now reaches about £1,100 per annum. "That your memorialists find by experience that property-holders in many instances use the efficiency of the Brigade as an argument for reducing or discontinuing their insurance, so that a twofold loss is experienced by the offices, viz., extra cost and reduction of premiums. "That the continual expense is thrown upon the Brigade by chimney fires, each of which costs the Brigade £5 at least. "That in addition to the very large amount of uninsured private property, the Government buildings, which must represent at least £150,000, are wholly uninsured, whilst both have the advantage of the protection afforded by the Brigade. "That the Government take the fines and fees levied on chimney fires, though the Brigade extinguish them. "That the small amount that can be recovered from either the Government or private uninsured persons on the occasion of a fire is only a repayment of the expenses incurred, but is no contribution towards the maintenance of the Brigade, that, perhaps, saved the property from total destruction. "That some years since it was found by the Insurance Offices that the burden of protecting the City of London, much of which was uninsured, became so heavy a tax on them that they determined to disband the Brigades unless Government would step in to assist. Accordingly in 1865 an arrangement was made by which Government took the Brigade in hand, placed it under the Board of Works, and contributed £10,000 a year as their share of the cost of protecting Government buildings. The Fire Offices agreed to pay £35 for every million of property they insured, and a rate of a half penny in the pound was agreed to be levied upon the inhabitants for the same purpose. "That, as in London, the fire offices here which instituted the Brigade for the protection of insured property, find that it is impossible to distinguish what is insured and uninsured, and they have really become the protectors of all alike, whether insured or not, and that the cost has become so great when compared with the amount received in premium, that they must of necessity reduce the cost, and in doing so the efficient protection the Brigade now gives to all parts of the city. "That before, however, taking such a step, your memorialists beg to suggest that Government should (as is done in London) contribute a sum, say £250, towards this expense ; and also should, through the Corporation, arrange to levy a rate of say ½d. in the pound on all property. "That the amount thus contributed would not place the Insurance

Companies in the same favorable position as in London, but it would so far reduce the cost to them that they would be prepared to continue to maintain the Brigade in its present efficient state. "That in London 20s. is the fine for permitting a chimney to take fire ; here, where the danger is much greater from this neglect, 5s. is considered sufficient.