

Adelaide Fire Brigade 1883

Number 3 Reel in 1880. Albert E. Holland in King William Street, Bootmaker. Located between Carrington and Halifax Street, just up from Job Morris's Blacksmith Shop.

James Wedlock Number 2 Fire Reel, at Hindley Street, possibly near 224 between Clarendon and Grey Streets.

Arthur baker listed on Hutt Street, between Angus and Hume Streets.

Glanville, John McAllister, Fireman

Wm McDonald, Fireman on Russel Street, Port Adelaide.

Joseph Morris, Number 3 Reel on King William Street.

Superintendent of Fire Brigades Robert Moore at Wakefield Street. (Ed. Misprinted as Robert, not Richard)

South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Thursday 4 January 1883, page 5

FIRE AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE.

Persons who were in the vicinity of the Post-Office on Wednesday evening, January 3, shortly before 6 o'clock were startled by hearing a cry of "Fire," and on looking around to ascertain from whence it proceeded were farther alarmed by the appearance of smoke issuing from the windows of the underground rooms of that building, which is one of the chief ornaments of the city—the Post Office. Police constable Thorn, who happened to be passing at the time, at once rushed into the police station and gave the alarm ; and since neither the superintendent of fire brigades (Capt, Moore) nor the brigades themselves are connected by telephone with the police station, it was found necessary for the con-stantle to take a cab and go for Captain Moore, whom he luckily found at home, and who was on the spot a quarter of an hour afterwards and at least twenty minutes before any of the brigades arrived. P.C. Walker, in the interval, played the hose belonging to the Post-Office down into the cellar through the door under the gangway on the northern side of the building, through which a dense volume of smoke was issuing. A large number of constables were also quickly on the spot, and Wedlock's reel soon arriving got their hose to work. A shout from the large crowd, who had by this time gathered in King William and Franklin streets, announced the arrival of the Register Fire Brigade and Harrison's Brigade. The various reels soon had their hoses fixed, and whilst Wedlock's played down the cellar in the north-east corner the other two poured strong streams through the windows on the western side. An attempt was then made to penetrate the building from the north-eastern end, but the smoke was too overpowering, and the explorers were soon compelled to beat a retreat. A dense volume of smoke was now perceived rising through the windows at the western end, and all the energies of the firemen were thereupon directed to that quarter. But the door had been locked and bolted and all the windows were barred, so the only thing to be done was to burst them in. For this purpose a short iron telegraph-pole was brought into requisition, and about twenty willing helpers laying hold of it used it as a battering ram. The door, however, withstood the rough treatment for some time, till at last a crash announced that it had given way, and one of the large hoses in charge of the Register men began playing. But though tons of water were poured in it did not seem to abate the conflagration in the least, the

smoke, if anything, being thicker. As smoke was observed to be rising in the main building, it was thought desirable to remove all the letters, papers, mail-bags, furniture, and other official paraphernalia, and a huge number of troopers, who had now arrived on the scene in undress uniform lent willing assistance to the post office officials. The crowd, who had by this time increased to a very large body, were kept back by a further relay of police, and this facilitated the efforts of those who were endeavoring to subdue the fire, and pre-vented any attempt at thieving. When the main floor had been got tolerably clear several holes were cut in the floor of the sorting department, with the object of seeing where the body of the flames lay. But little good resulted from this, and several intrepid firemen and others endeavored to get into the cellar by means of a staircase at the south-western end of the building, but were forced to retreat by reason of the smoke that rushed up the aperture, as though it were a chimney. By this time the Postmaster-General, Mr. C. Todd, C.M.G., was on the scene, and exerted himself to the utmost, his local knowledge and tact being found of special service to the brigades. A few minutes before 7 it was stated that the fire had spread under the money-order and record offices, and considerable excitement was caused by a report getting wind that in addition to the other explosive chemicals stored under the building there was a jar of gun cotton. On enquiry, however, fear was allayed, by it being made known that this and other combustible materials had been removed. The floor of the money-order office was broken open at the south entrance to the building, when suffocating volumes of smoke were emitted, filling the principal hall, and rendering one's presence there exceedingly un-comfortable. No. 1 hose was brought into requisition here, and the basement, which now presented the appearance of a furnace, deluged with water, the operation being under the personal supervision of Captain Moore, who, together with a number of fire-men, put forth strenuous, but, for a time, futile, efforts to subdue the raging element. At this point the idea gained ground that a quantity of chemicals in the basement about the centre of the main hall might be touched ; and attempts, it appeared, were about to be made to break up the floor in the hall to prevent a mishap, but after one or two digs at the floor it was deemed advisable not to do so. Soon after 7 o'clock the windows of the money-order office on the south side of the building were smashed in, and the hose played down from the street. The crowd at this spot was large, an immense and excited concourse of people having assembled, the railings of the square being surmounted by boys and men, who from their position of vantage witnessed the scene over the heads of the people before them. Several troopers found plenty to do in their efforts to maintain order, and to keep the crowd from approaching too close to the Post-Office. About this time a member of the police force received a lesson in manners. The member in question was standing on duty at the south entrance to the building when there issued from the crowd a gentleman who desired to enter. The trooper whose presence somewhat barred the way did not as a matter of course jump aside at his approach, whereupon the gentleman roughly thrust him aside and passed in. Advancing a few paces into the interior, he stopped and turned, and after angrily surveying the man on duty for a moment, approached him. "Why," he angrily cried, "don't you make way for me when you see I want to pass? Do you know who I am ?" "No, sir, I do not," was the response of the custodian of the peace. "Know, then," said the irate gentleman, "that I am the — — —, d—n you!" And then the gentleman passed on. It took some time to get the flames under in the vicinity of the money-order office. But thanks to the efforts of the firemen they were at last subdued. A number of fire-men after breaking the railings boldly entered the cellar at this spot, but were nearly suffocated by the smoke, Messrs. Harrison, Shaw, Lawrence, Matthews, and Wedlock specially distinguishing

themselves. At the south-west portion of the building smoke was issuing from the cellar. A fireman named Powell, belonging to the Register brigade, entered the aperture for the purpose of getting the hose up, but after entering, a sudden burst of fire and smoke nearly suffocated him, and he was dragged out in an almost helpless condition. At half-past 7 o'clock the Norwood Volunteer Fire Brigade arrived, having been brought by Fire-man Caterer, and part of the men went to work in the centre of the building, while the rest adding their efforts to those of the Register brigade at the rear of the building. The men in the centre of the building, near the letter delivery department, went to work with renewed energy with axes and crowbars on the floor. Having cut through the joists sufficiently to admit a man (the joists being exceedingly close together) a large hose was played down the opening. This happened to be the right spot, for the hissing noise which followed their exertions indicated that the two elements had met. This was at twenty minutes to 8. The firemen next broke down the railings to the west of the entrance on the south side at the building, and breaking the windows adjoining it, No. 7 reel got another hose to work there. The smoke and steam that now emanated from the building was thicker than a London fog, and it even came through the drain pipes running into the gutters. Several of the firemen again entered the cellars, and forcing their way to where the kerosine was stored seized the hot cases, and carried them to a place of safety at the risk of their lives, their fingers being scorched in the effort. Captain Moore and Messrs. Wedlock and Harrison, at the south-eastern corner of the building fronting Franklin-street, entered that part of the building several times, and when they came to the surface again were in an almost swooning condition. As they appeared determined to persevere in their efforts it was deemed advisable to tie life-lines around them, and so ensure their safety to a greater degree. Several of the fire-men found that the water on the floor of the cellar, of which there was about two feet, was quite warm, and it was of course requisite to use lanterns. Mr. Wedlock stated that the body of the fire appeared to be just under the delivery counters, and hoses were brought to bear on that place, and a number of the firemen endeavored to get near it from different points, in which effort several of them got soaked and scorched. Soon after this Mr. Wedlock came up, and said that the fire appeared to be decreasing. Mr. Harrison at 10 minutes past 8 announced that all was safe, and that the fire was likely to be soon got under. This was not the case, however, till about a quarter to 9, and even then smoke recommenced to issue from the windows on the Franklin-street side ; but the place was copiously deluged with water, and all the windows being thrown open, the evening breeze soon cleared the stifling atmosphere and rendered ingress to the building a less unpleasant task. At 9.15 the bugle calling the firemen together was sounded, and on the various companies being mustered no one was found to be missing. Captain Moore then placed the several watches for the night, and the men who were not on duty left the scene. The police also returned to their usual duties, and all the approaches to the post-office being closed, a large number of the police assisted by the post and telegraph officers commenced the work of replacing the things that had been carried into the police station yard. This was carried out under the superintendence of Mr. Todd, Mr. W. J. Peterswald (Commissioner of Police), Inspector Sullivan, and several of the police sergeants, and was completed by about mid-night. The hall, and in fact the whole of the building was then lit up with gas, and the usual postal business recommenced. Telegraphic work and letter sorting was soon in full swing, and was carried on as if nothing had happened. The crowd, which at 9 most have numbered several thousands, seeing that the fire had been got under and there being no-thing to be seen from the outside of the building except a number of broken windows and railings,

began at about 9.30 to disperse, and by midnight the street was comparatively empty. Nothing is known as to the cause of the fire. Fortunately the substantial nature of the structure prevented, in a measure, the progress of the flames. It should be re-marked that there is no communication what-ever between the police-station and the residence of Capt. Moore, or with any of the fire brigade stations or waterworks. This shows the necessity that exists for immediate action on the part of the authorities in connection with remedying this want. It was fortunate that assistance was so speedily rendered after the discovery of the outbreak, for, in the opinion of Captain Moore, if the reels had arrived ten minutes later, the consequences might have been most disastrous. Such an opinion is warranted, when it is remembered that the quantity of gun-cotton already referred to was rather large, there being several pounds of it. It is stated that the cotton was obtained some time since for experimental purposes. Captain Moore's greatest fear was that the existence of the gun cotton would become generally known, a fact which might have resulted in a general scare and the exit of those whose services were so urgently needed. He therefore took particular care to suppress the spread of any such reports. When the fire was first discovered it was suggested that the Town Hall should be improvised for the purpose of carrying on the work of the Post-Office in the event of the building being seriously damaged, but luckily the result rendered such a step unnecessary. It is stated by one of the officers in charge of a portion of the basement office, that when he left and locked up the premises under his care at 5.20 everything appeared to be safe. The Post-Office officials rendered useful assistance in the attempts to subdue the flames, and the police authorities deserve congratulation for the manner in which they discharged their duties. The greatest credit is due to the fire-men in charge of the fire-reels, not only on account of the prompt manner in which they arrived, but also for the energetic way in which they worked. This is the first fire that the reels connected with the Fire Brigade Board have attended. It will be remembered that during the last session of Parliament a Bill, entitled the "Fire Brigades Act of 1882" was passed. In it provision was made for the establishment of a Fire Brigade Board, consisting of two gentlemen representing the Government, two of the City Corporation, and three representing the Fire Insurance Companies. Further provision was made for the appointment of a superintendent and a secretary to the board. On January 1 this year Captain Moore, who has had great experience both in England and in Victoria, was appointed superintendent and secretary to the board, at a salary of £350 per annum. It will be seen by this that the superintendent has had but little time to collect his forces and get his gear in really good working order. In consequence of the changes the whole of the stations were placed at a disadvantage in not having telephonic communication. In spite of these drawbacks, however, the brigades were not caught napping yesterday. There are two fire reel stations in the city, and one in North Adelaide, which also belongs to the board. These, of course, are controlled by Captain Moore. In addition to the above there is the Nor-wood Volunteer Fire Brigade, which was established some time last year, and the cost of which was met by private subscriptions. There are also several private reels in the city, all of which, including the Norwood reel, place themselves under the superintendent of fire brigades in case of a fire breaking out. The fire was first reported at the city police-station at five minutes past 6 o'clock. The sergeant in charge, after sending for Captain Moore dispatched a messenger to fetch Inspector Sullivan, of the foot police. Inspector Hunt, of the mounted police, was apprised of the fire by telephone. A tele-phone message was next sent to Commissioner Peterswald at the Semaphore. In the meantime the whole of the city brigades had been warned of the break out of the fire. No. 2 horse reel, Foreman Wedlock, arrived first on the scene. Mr. Wedlock

received in-formation of the fire at 6.20 p.m., and at 6.25 he with his horse reel was on the spot. Two and a half minutes after his arrival he was playing water on from King William-street. Their reel was served by four men. Directly this reel was in full swing Mr. Wedlock with his son started their hand reel, which was stationed in King William-street. The Register reel, manned by six men, arrived next, and played water on from the back of the Post-Office, where they were were supported by the Post-Office reel. No. 1 reel, in charge of Fore-man Harrison, manned by five men followed close in the wake of the Register reel. With Harrison's No. 1. horse reel is associated a hand reel, which, was brought along with the horse reel. These reels came so soon after the Register reel that the men in charge claim to have arrived second. Both, reels took up stations in Franklin-street, the horse reel taking the first plug, and the hand reel the second. The Norwood hand reel came last. They received information at 7 o'clock and at twenty minutes past they were on the spot. The reel was not required to play water, so the men, eight in all, assisted to work the others. The reel is in perfect order as regards gear, and is only excelled by the fine body of men who work it, and who are appropriately uniformed. The North Adelaide reel, No. 4, did not put in an appearance, its absence being accounted for by the fact that there is no telephonic communication. All the reels worked admirably, and Captain Moore states that the men in charge all did their best to get the fire under and that no special praise is due to any particular reel. He adds that the pungent nature of the smoke prevented them for some time from getting at the fire, but that by breaking holes in the flooring of the first floor—that is above the basement—they were enabled to see and to reach the flames. He also states that the damage done is comparatively trifling, and was chiefly caused by the water and the removal of the different articles. All the time the fire was raging a small four-horse power engine at the rear of the premises, which is used for pumping the cellars dry, was kept hard at work, and was still busy at 2 o'clock this morning and to this fact may to a great extent be ascribed the celerity with which the premises were freed from water. Mr. Cornelius, who has been working at the Post-Office for the last four years, has, we are informed, been the only person whose employment has taken him below for the past two days. He does not smoke, and can assign no reason for the conflagration. He locked up the up-stairs offices at about 5 o'clock on Wednesday evening, as is his custom, and Mr. Witherick the caretaker at the Post-Office, locked up the underground department, and both of them say that everything then appeared as usual. An inspection of the building after the fire was subdued gave one a clearer idea of the locality and the character of the outbreak than could have been obtained under other circumstances. Being conducted through the basement floor shortly after midnight we entered by the stairs facing the night-clerks, entrance-door, just inside the yard off King William-street. It was here that the first volume of smoke issued indicating the disaster and as at the foot of the stairs there is a passage leading straight to the crypt where the fire is supposed to have originated, this passage was the main outlet at which the dense volumes of smoke could make their escape. On the left of the passage, with windows leading into King William-street, are the instrument rooms and workshops, in which are a great number of costly instruments whose loss could not easily have been replaced. These fortunately are all untouched by fire, but some of them have been rusted by steam and damaged by smoke, as the flames that rushed up the passage blistered the doors and broke through the glass partitions into the rooms. On the same side is the "ladies' room" used by the lady operators. At the end of the passage the record room is situated, where old telegrams for the past ten or twenty years are kept, and this fortunately escaped the action of the fire. On the right of the passage are the battery rooms and postal store-rooms, which

are comparatively uninjured, except by the water and smoke. To the right of the record room a passage-way opens into the crypt—a space which is covered by the large public entrance-hall. The crypt is of very solid brickwork and masonry in pillars, and it was here that the fire evidently broke out amongst a quantity of lumber and packing cases kept in reserve for supplies to be forwarded to the Northern Territory. At the west end of the crypt are the caretaker's private quarters, and these have a sadly dilapidated appearance. While the fire raged within the crypt there was but little danger to the building, but a wood and glass door permitted the flames to get through to a stationery room beneath the money-order office in the south wing of the building, and here was the great danger of the fire spreading over the whole edifice. The ceiling of this room was merely soft wood and canvas, with wooden rafters, but fortunately the firemen were enabled to break through from above, and pour the water down and flood out the flames. Had the conflagration occurred in the night or obtained a good hold in this quarter it would have burnt through the floor of the money-order office, and probably have demolished the southern wing of the building before it could have been subdued. The fierceness of the flames or denseness of the smoke at this spot was made apparent from the dead body of a favorite cat of the caretaker's which lay at the door of this room, the unfortunate animal having been overtaken before it could make good its escape. On the other side of the crypt, nearly facing this door, stand boxes containing valuable transit and meteorological instruments for the observatory, valued at several thousand pounds. The boxes present the appearance of having been a good deal scorched, but it is hoped that their contents are safe. Some portions of the crypt were intensely hot, but there was no danger of another outbreak, and by means of the pumping engine outside nearly all the water had been drained off the floors, so the place could be inspected without a great deal of discomfort except from the smoke-laden atmosphere.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 6 January 1883, page 30

THE FIRE BRIGADES AND SUPERINTENDENT MOORE.

The fire happened at a particularly unfortunate time, owing to the fact that the arrangements for the reorganization of the City Fire Brigade have not been fully carried out. The stations had not been finally fixed upon, the firemen had not been so thoroughly equipped as was desirable, and above and beyond these matters was the absence of the usual telephonic communication between the Police Station and the Superintendent's house and the stations. This latter fact caused a delay of fully a quarter of an hour in the summoning of the reels and the Superintendents, who had to be communicated with by cabs, and while this waste of valuable time was much to be deplored it is a matter for congratulation that the results did not prove far more serious. The Superintendent, Mr. Moore, was the first to arrive at the scene of the fire, and at once set to work assisting the police with the Post Office hose until the reels arrived. No. 2 Reel (Wedlock's) stationed in Hindley street was the first to come, and after a short time spent in the yard, started operations in Franklin-street. Nos. 7 and 3, and No. 1 Reel of Rundle-street also put in an appearance soon after the Register contingent were in the yard, and the Norwood Brigade likewise turned up in good time. No. 4 (North Adelaide) Reel was not on hand till all was over. All the men worked with hearty goodwill, and the Superintendent expresses himself as highly satisfied with the way in which his own men behaved, and his high appreciation of the behaviour of the Register and Norwood men, who placed themselves under his orders. He suggests that it would have been a little better if fewer private persons had interfered with the operations of the Brigades. He thinks the present fire should act as a warning to the

authorities, and show them the necessity of having a central Fire Brigade, with permanent men always ready for duty, and that it should also be regarded as a proof of the advisability of having large public and private buildings fitted with the best appliances for the extinguishing of fire. He says the fire was of a most difficult nature to deal with, and that if ten minutes more time had been lost the whole of the Post-Office building would probably have been reduced to a ruin.

South Australian Weekly Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1881 - 1889), Saturday 13 January 1883, page 22

THE POST-OFFICE AND OUR FIRE BRIGADES.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir— Now that the Post-Office fire is fresh in our minds, and the lesson it teaches us may bear good fruit in the future, a few words of personal observation on the working of the fire brigades may not be out of place. I was present at the Post-Office just as the clock struck 6, and several police and detectives with some of the Post-Office officials were then engaged in endeavoring, by the aid of the Post-Office hose, to suppress the flames that were visible to them in the passage leading from the crypt, and terminating at the steps in the area at the north - western corner of the building. These men were working judiciously and pluckily, but were constantly calling out for more hose, the length of hose apparently not being sufficient to enable them to go far up the passage, and before the brigades arrived the fire had made considerable headway. I would ask what length of serviceable hose have the Post-Office authorities in actual use— not stowed away in a vault, but ready for immediate service. There was a good supply of water at the Post-Office standpipe, and had more hose been available I believe P.C. Walker and the few ready helpers who were assisting him at that stage would have subdued the fire before the brigades arrived on the scene. At a quarter past 6 Superintendent Moore arrived in a cab, fully equipped for action, and he showed very commendable alacrity from the time that he received notice of the disaster. He was very active directly he arrived in getting some barrels of insulators removed from a grating at the rear, from whence large volumes of smoke were issuing, and upon which he got the hose to play. The superintendent was for fully ten minutes assisted only by the police and civilians (including Mr. G. Pleass, of Fry and Co., King William-street, who did yeo-man's service all through.) At twenty-five minutes past 6 the first lot of firemen in uniform appeared almost simultaneously with the Register brigade. The fire had then been burning more than half an hour. Except an utter want of organisation, nothing can be said against the manner in which the firemen worked directly they were on the scene, and they continued to arrive up till half -past seven, when the Norwood brigade put in an appearance. The fire had then been burning for at least one hour and a half. About this time the smoke had reached the upper portions of the building, and as a means of getting to the rooms above, two constables were ordered to get the fire-escape ready. 'Don't touch that,' exclaimed someone in authority ; ' if you move it it will come to pieces.' A fire-escape must not be moved from the place where it stands, and has no doubt stood for many months past, because if required for actual use it will fall to pieces ! I believe the man's warning was well founded, because the escape looks like a rickety ma-chine that could not be relied upon if required for use. Suppose it were needed for the escape of several persons from the upper storeys, and when they were forty or fifty feet from the ground the machine broke and these people lost their lives, would not someone be liable to an indictment for manslaughter? I once saw an escape break in this way at home, and it was only by something akin to a miracle that three lives were not lost.

As an observer of what was passing at the fire I noticed there was scarcely a branch of the brigades that had not defective hose. At first the hose was bursting in all directions, and Mr. R F. Long and others attempted to repair the breaches, but these useless lengths of hose had to be disconnected and discarded not only causing delay, but shortening the supply of hose. From his credentials and the manner in which he went about his work on Wednesday I should think Mr. Moore is a practical man whose suggestions should be treated with respect by the Fire Brigades Board, and whose schemes should be carried out promptly and regardless of cost, so that the citizens of Adelaide may have the assurance that their lives and their property are in safekeeping against fire. I write to you on this subject in the hope that those who are most concerned will awake to the belief that a great deal has to be done before we shall be able to boast of fire brigades or fire quelling appliances that will at all compare with those of the ether colonies. I have no hesitation in asserting that our appliances are disgrace-fully defective, and that however willing the individual members of the brigades may be, they have a great deal yet to learn before they could hope to compete with the firemen of Melbourne, Sydney, Ballarat, or Sandhurst. As this is a very good time for ventilating the subject I would suggest that the Government pay the cost of a conference in which the captains of one of the Melbourne brigades— say of Carlton, and of a Sandhurst, a Ballarat, and a Sydney brigade be brought over to act with Mr. Moore and our local fire brigade board in the formation and establishment of a brigade of sufficient power to cope with any fire that may occur in the city. The conference should bring up a scheme which should be carried out in every detail, irrespective of cost, because as practical men they would only recommend what was absolutely required, and their appliances would be of the latest and most effective description. I believe one of their recommendations would be the erection of a central fire tower, with a bell or fog horn that could be heard all over the city and suburbs, and by which every fireman would receive the same summons at the first intimation of a fire in the daytime or by the watch man on duty at night. The fire at the Post-Office was known to be in existence at ten minutes to 6 on Wednesday; and had a similar outbreak taken place in Melbourne, Ballarat, or Sandhurst, there would have been at least fifty firemen on the spot within five minutes past 6. It was only by a fluke and the pluck of the men who were engaged in suppressing the fire on Wednesday that the Post-Office building and perhaps half King William street were not entirely destroyed. Had the flames obtained a more secure hold of the stationery-room and money-order office, no appliance that our brigades possess could have grappled with the foe successfully, and many thousands of pounds worth of property would have been destroyed. Now that the danger is past we must not turn away from the subject as though a big conflagration may never occur in Adelaide. I was present at the great fire in London when Braidwood lost his life. A hotelkeeper in Tooley-street, a dozen houses away from the warehouses where the fire first broke out, was doing a roaring trade all night. The police, firemen, and the public had the free run of the house, the land-lord being instructed to provide everyone with refreshment in recognition of the services they were rendering in working the engines,, &c. The publican ran out of his stock, and he was heard to exclaim in great glee, I would like a fire such as this to occur every night: That publican spoke a little too soon, for notwithstanding every effort of the London brigades the fire continued its ravages, and the night following, that publican's house was burned to the ground; The recent great fire in Wood-street, London Wall, by which over a million pounds' worth of property was destroyed shows how rapidly and dangerously a conflagration may spread, and I am convinced that had the fire on Wednesday made its way from the money-order office to the rooms in the upper floor the

post-office must have been destroyed, and with it possibly the whole block of buildings from Franklin-street to Waymouth-street with the Advertiser office included.—I am &c., An Onlooker January 4, 1883,

Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Monday 12 February 1883, page 2

THE LATE SUPERINTENDENT OF FIRE BRIGADES.

We publish this afternoon a letter from Mr. Arthur John Baker, explaining the circumstances under which his twenty-three years' connection with the Fire Brigades of the colony was brought to an abrupt conclusion on the appointment of the first Board under the recently passed Fire Brigades Act. It will be generally admitted that Mr. Baker, in spite of often very inefficient appliances, always discharged the duties devolving on him as Superintendent of Fire Brigades with promptness and intelligence. Besides this, he spent the best years of his life in this service, and this of itself constituted a substantial claim to some consideration at the hands of the Fire Brigades Board. On looking into the facts of the case as disclosed by Mr. Baker it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the treatment he received is illustrative of the fact that the memory of service done does not linger long with public Boards, which are popularly supposed to be deficient in the necessary conditions for present and future punishment. Be this as it may, Mr. Baker states that he was fully prepared to continue in his position until the Brigades were thoroughly organized, and that he prepared and furnished the Board with useful information for their guidance. Without reflecting on the ability of the present Superintendent—for we believe that is beyond question—this information would have been of great service to the Board, and besides this there was good reason why at the very least Mr. Baker's advice should have been sought. But instead of adopting this course the very first act of the newly appointed Board was to advertise for a Superintendent at a salary of £100 a year less than that paid to Mr. Baker. Naturally enough Mr. Baker regarded this as a strong intimation that he should vacate office, and that this was a correct view was amply confirmed by the subsequent action of Mr. Abrahams, the Chairman of the Fire Insurers' Association; for when Mr. Baker, after the appointment of Mr. Moore, wrote to that gentleman for further instructions and compensation for removal from office, he was simply directed to continue on duty till midnight on December 31. This was rather cavalier treatment which does not redound to the credit of those who indulged in it. We have previously adverted to Mr. Baker's special claim on the Insurance Companies for some kind of compensation or retiring allowance. His long years of faithful, zealous, and highly efficient service furnish a title to some consideration of that nature at the hands of those who have benefited so largely from his exertions, and we believe that if an appeal to supplement any subscriptions raised in this way were made to the business public it would be freely responded to.

South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Tuesday 13 February 1883, page 5

FIRE AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

Considerable excitement was caused in the city at an early hour on Monday evening, when it was rumored that Government House was on fire. A general rush to the domain took place, and smoke was seen issuing from above the south hall. The police on duty were reinforced and the gates were strongly guarded, only those whose business it was to be present being admitted. By this means, a large amount of the trouble usually experienced at conflagrations was happily averted, and the firemen were enabled to prosecute their work with as little

interruption as possible. In about an hour's time the flames were completely subdued, but the men continued to play water on the building for some time after. It appears that at twenty-five minutes to 7 o'clock Constable Cogan, the sentry on duty at Government House gate, called the attention of Constable McShane, who was also on sentry duty, to the fact that smoke was issuing from Government House. His alarm was excited owing to the smoke being very dense, and McShane immediately ran down to the house and informed the inmates that he believed a fire had broken out. His Excellency the Acting-Governor was away on a visit to the Hon. A. Hay, M.L.C., at Port Victor, and there were only the servants in the house at the time. Finding that the fire was of a somewhat extensive character the constable, with the assistance of a man named James Evans, a blacksmith, who had observed the flames from North-terrace, got out the Government reel, which was placed at the rear of the premises. The hose was fixed to a standpipe situated at the north-west corner of the building, and several other persons having arrived a ladder was procured, and the hose was passed through one of the back windows. At this time the fire had evidently secured a good hold, and the water, of which there was fortunately an ample supply, was not brought to bear on the flames a moment too soon. In the meantime Constable Cogan had not been idle. He had despatched several men who were passing by to the various reel stations, and also sent cabs to the police-station and to Superintendent Moore, at the head-reel station in Wakefield-street. Within a very short time after the summons the reels were on the spot, the crowd which had assembled at the gate cheering the men lustily as they dashed through the main entrance into the domain. Superintendent Moore soon had the men in their proper positions, and every effort was put forth to quell the fiery element. As new hose had been furnished to the fire brigade the delays which in the past have frequently occurred owing to the bursting of the pipes were obviated to a very considerable extent. The fire was now raging fiercely, and as there was a slight breeze some fears were entertained that other portions of the building would fall a prey to the devouring element. Ladders were placed against the walls on the southern side of the house, and the firemen and several volunteers soon reached the top of the structure. The hose was passed up to them, and the efforts made by those below and those who were nearest the scene of the conflagration soon began to take effect. In the interim about thirty foot constables had arrived under the command of Corporal Bennett, who was subsequently succeeded by Inspector Sullivan, and there were also twelve troopers present under Sergeant Campbell. It was deemed advisable to remove the furniture from the drawing, waiting, and reception rooms and the eastern hall, and in a very few minutes the object of the willing workers was accomplished. At about a quarter-past 7 o'clock the flames were got under, and no further danger was anticipated; although, to make assurance doubly sure, a copious stream of water was kept playing on the smouldering embers for some time. When the fire was at its height Mr. E. Foweraker, a carpenter, while attempting to get from the top of a ladder at the rear of the building to the roof, missed his hold and fell a distance of about 13 feet, fortunately sustaining comparatively little injury considering the nature of the accident. Amongst those whose endeavors in quenching the flames were most conspicuous was Mr. Cahill, a butcher, who worked unceasingly from the outbreak of the fire until it had been suppressed. The Hon. J. C. Bray (Chief Secretary) was sent for shortly after the alarm of fire was given, and arrived a little after 7 o'clock. Mr. E. J. Woods (Architect-in-Chief), Mr. A. Abrahams, Alderman Fox, Councillors Shaw and Siebert, and other gentlemen were also present and rendered valuable assistance. An inspection of the building after the conflagration showed that the fire must have originated in the ceiling of the strawberry-room, which is situated

above the south hall in the centre of the building, and is in the vicinity of the bedroom recently occupied by Sir Wm. Jervis and the large blue room. The strawberry room and the blue room are both bedrooms usually apportioned to guests, and they contained furniture of some value. As all the rooms had been renovated the amount of damage done was by no means inconsiderable, the water which was played upon the building being responsible for the greater portion of this damage. The four rooms to which the fire was confined were those lately in the occupation of Sir Wm. and Lady Jervis. The strawberry room and the blue room and their contents suffered. As soon as it was known that the fire had been effectually got under lights were procured and every effort was made to prevent the water which had been poured on to the premises leaking into the lower apartments. All the carpets on the staircases and along the passages were, at the orders of the housekeeper, removed so as to avoid as much as possible the damage which would be done by the water. Below it was evident that although the flames had not extended to this portion of the building considerable injury had been done. Water was percolating through the ceilings, and had it not been for the removal of the carpets and furniture much more damage would have been done than actually was the case. As it was the papering of the walls suffered considerably, and will have to be replaced. The drawing and morning rooms, in the eastern wing of the building, were uninjured, but the supper-room and south hall, which are in the centre of the house, were thoroughly drenched. The ceilings of the reception and waiting rooms were leaking in places, especially the latter, but as the carpet had been removed the damage done was of a trifling nature. On the eastern wall of the reception-room there was a magnificent portrait of Her Majesty the Queen, which, it was feared, would be ruined, but luckily the water that fell did not touch it. In the supper room there were two full length portraits of King William the Fourth and Queen Adelaide, under the latter of which was the following inscription :—"Her Majesty Queen Adelaide, painted by H. Duke after the picture by Sir Martin Shee, R.R.A., in the possession of Her Majesty the Queen, presented by Governor the Right Hon. Sir James Fergusson Bart., 1870." Every care was taken to see that these pictures were preserved, the Architect-in-Chief and Cr. Shaw being particularly active in attending to their preservation. Some anxiety was felt early in the evening that the flames would reach the gas, but happily all danger on this score was averted. At a few minutes after 6 o'clock all the apartments in the eastern portion of the building were lighted up, and then it was known that the flames had been extinguished. It is of course a difficult matter to estimate the amount of the damage done, but in spite of the comparatively short duration of the fire it is somewhat considerable. It is well known that workmen were on the premises preparing the house for the reception of His Excellency Sir W. C. F. Robinson, who is expected to arrive from West Australia in the course of a few days, and it is said that at least £700 worth of damage has been done. The building belonging to the Government is, according to the rule laid down in this colony, uninsured, and the outbreak of this fire, following so closely on that which occurred recently at the Post-Office, will open up the interesting question as to whether it would not be worth while to insure all Government structures. It is not perhaps difficult to conjecture the cause of the conflagration.

It appears that during the last week several workmen in the employ of Mr. J. Fitzpatrick have been engaged in soldering the roofs of the building. On Monday afternoon they were working on the top of the strawberry room, and it is surmised, as the flames were first seen rising from that quarter, that in some manner or other they were responsible for the catastrophe. However, it may be supposed that at the coroner's inquest, which will shortly be held, the real facts of the case will be brought to light and the origin of the fire made

known. We have been supplied with particulars as to the fire by persons who were present at the time of its outbreak, which are subjoined : —

THE HOUSEKEEPER'S STATEMENT.

Miss Bridget Broderick, housekeeper, made the following statement to our reporter—I have been employed at Government House as housekeeper for about eight years, and superintended the arrangements made for preparing the house for the new Governor's reception. The house was very nearly ready last week. The eastern hall was freshly carpeted, and the other rooms had undergone a thorough renovation. To the best of my belief the plumbers, who had been engaged on the roof left their work at about 5 o'clock. At that time everything appeared to be perfectly quiet, and there were certainly no signs of fire. I was drinking tea in my room with the other girls when Constable McShane came down and told us that the house was on fire. I had visited the upper premises few minutes previously and found no indication of fire. The Governors and his lady's bedroom have been completely spoiled, as also have been the strawberry and the blue rooms. The drawing and morning rooms in the lower apartments were not injured at all, but the supper room and southern hall are a complete wreck. The waiting room and reception room, however, are not much damaged. The furniture in these and the lower rooms generally were removed before the water came through the ceiling. I did my best to save the furniture from being destroyed.

CONSTABLE McSHANE'S STATEMENT.

Constable McShane's states:—I was on duty at sentry at the Government House gate at 6.15 p.m., with Constable Cogan. My attention was directed by Cogan to some smoke issuing from the centre of the roof of Government House. I immediately ran to the house and informed the servants. We then inspected the building, and discovered that the fire was burning in the ceiling of the strawberry-room. I, accompanied by Hawkins, the butler, and a man named Evans, procured the Government House hose, and assisted in placing it in a favorable position for playing on the fire. I then went to the police-station and officially reported the occurrence. Prior to this I had, however, despatched cabs and some persons to give information at the police-station and at the various fire-reel stations. After this I returned to the scene of the fire and assisted in extinguishing the flames.

JAS. EVANS'S STATEMENT.

Jas. Evens, a blacksmith, of Norwood, states—I was passing along North-terrace at about half-past 6 o'clock on Monday evening when I perceived smoke issuing from the roof of Government House. I immediately in-formed a cabman of the fact and requested him to report the matter at the police-station, which I believe he did. I assisted in fixing the hose and playing on the fire.

SUPERINTENDENT MOORE'S STATEMENT.

Superintendent Moore says—At about 6.35 p.m. I was informed that a fire had broken out at Government House. I immediately communicated with all the different reels, and requested that all the engines might be turned out as soon as possible. I went at once to Government House and found the roof of the strawberry room alight. I got the men, who were soon on the spot, at work as quickly as possible. The water fortunately was plentiful, and we soon had the fire under. The damage, considering the nature of the fire, was not so

great as might be expected. The police and several volunteers rendered valuable help. The building, as usual with Government buildings, is uninsured.

THE BUTLER'S STATEMENT.

Thomas Hawkins, butler, says:—I was called by the police constable on duty at the gate at about half-past 6 o'clock. I immediately went upstairs into the rooms, where the fire appeared to be coming from, and looking through the skylight saw the flames in the roof. I was the first in the house who saw the fire. Then I came down and assisted to pull our reel out, and at that time the two gardeners, J. Holmes, who resides on the outskirts of the grounds, and John Hays, had arrived. We then played on the fire, and our efforts stopped the flames from spreading to the west wing. The firemen about this time arrived, and the hose was then taken in charge by them. I with the other men on the premises assisted the firemen until the flames were extinguished.

South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Tuesday 13 February 1883, page 6

FIRE AT ROBE-TERRACE.

The excitement occasioned by the fire at Government-house had scarcely subsided when the report was circulated that. Robe-terrace, a row of houses and shops, situated in Waymonth-street, was on fire. A large crowd was soon to be seen hurrying in the direction of the buildings above mentioned, and a number of fire reels were speedily on the spot, but owing to the well-directed efforts of about half-a-dozen men, the fire, which at first gave every evidence of assuming large proportions, was got under without the assistance of the firemen. At about 5.40 p.m. a man named A. McCulloch, a carpenter, residing in Regent-street, was sitting outside his door when he observed a large sheet of flame in the window of T. Hodges's secondhand shop, which stands at the western extremity of the terrace. He immediately rushed across the road, giving the alarm at the same time, and having nothing better at hand smashed in the windows with his hat, in which endeavor he lacerated his hand severely. A small boy simultaneously appeared on the scene with an axe, and with this McCulloch broke in the casement. A dense volume of smoke was emitted from the aperture thus made, and six or seven neighbors being at hand with buckets full of water the window was quickly swamped. Several constables now put in an appearance in charge of Corporal Mee, and a portion of them kept back the crowd whilst the rest joined their efforts with those who were already lending valuable assistance. The hose at the back of the terrace belonging to Messrs. Formby and Boase, was also brought into requisition, and within twenty minutes from the time of the alarm being given, the flames were entirely subdued, and the services of the fire brigade were not required at all. The origin of the fire is unknown. The building, stock, and furniture are insured for £800, we believe, in the Imperial Fire Insurance Office.

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Friday 16 February 1883, page 2

FIRE IN RUNDLE-STREET.

Soon after 9 o'clock on Thursday evening, February 15, an alarm of fire was spread in the vicinity of the Military Club, at the corner of Pulteney and Rundle streets, and a moment afterwards smoke was observed rising from the centre of a block of buildings situate in Rundle-street, on the west side of Pulteney-street. The block included premises occupied by Mr. E. Klinker, restaurant-keeper ; Messrs. R. H. Adams & Co., boot-makers ; Mr. Henderson,

confectioner; Messrs. Rushton & Just, photographers; Mr. J. W. Porter, chemist; and Mr. Hiscocks, fancy-dealer. The alarm having rapidly spread a crowd soon gathered. The smoke was then followed by flames, which in consequence of a favorable wind speedily assumed large proportions. Mr. J. W. Spurr, residing in Pulteney street, on seeing the flames at once went to the premises of Mr. Shaw, of the Fire-Brigade, who lives near the rear of the premises, in charge of reels No. 1 and 7, which are kept in the locality, and in less than ten minutes, in conjunction with three firemen, procured the hose and fixed it to the fireplug in Pulteney-street, and began to play on the rear of the premises. The seat of the fire was now discovered to be located in a galvanized iron and wood building used as an operating room, belonging to Messrs. Rushton and Just. At this point two lengths of the hose belonging to No. 1 reel, which continued playing at the back, burst in five places, the result being the discomfiture of the firemen in charge, who attempted, but at first vainly, to plug up the holes by applying pocket-handkerchief bandages. It seems that a fireman named Duggall, belonging to No. 3 reel, scaled the wall in Pulteney-street for the purpose of better applying the hose to the house adjacent to that on fire, but on requesting the use of the hose for that purpose he was denied, those in charge of it preferring to utilize it in an attempt to quench the existing flames. A dispute as to which was the spot most de-serving of their attention then arose, those in possession of the piping generously deluging Duggall with water. Other two reels shortly arrived, and were used, one in Rundle-street opposite the York Hotel, the other in Rundle-street opposite Mr. Klinker's. About this time a body of constables, mounted and on foot, forty in number, arrived, under the charge of Inspectors Sullivan and Hunt, Sergeants Tate, Irvine, and Campbell also being in attendance. The presence of the constabulary was found very necessary, as the crowd had already vastly increased, no less than 5,000 people being present, considerable difficulty being experienced by the troopers in keeping them back. It was found necessary to stop the vehicular traffic, the Nor-wood trams being ordered to take Hindmarsh square route. Captain Moore, the superintendent of the fire brigade, was early on the spot, and soon set to work in the organisation of a plan for quenching the conflagration. For nearly three-quarters of an hour the flames were rampant, and were seen at a distance of two miles from the scene; the impression being that very serious mischief would be wrought before they could possibly be quenched. Fortunately, however, what might have been a catastrophe of a serious nature was prevented by the united efforts of Captain Moore and his co-workers. The flames were at their height at about half-past 9; when several men distinguished themselves by individual effort. A man, for instance, having procured a footing on the building adjoining that where the fire was most intense, in an endeavor to knock in the sides of the build-ing to facilitate the working of the hose, lost his footing and fell a distance of eight feet, when, nothing dismayed by his mis-hap, he again scrambled up to his former position, and finally succeeded in accomplish-ing his design, his success being loudly applauded by the numerous spectators below. The butcher who worked so hard in assisting to put out the recent fire at Government House, was equally conspicuous on this occasion, his efforts with the hose being marked by great perseverance, and resulting in personal loss so far as his clothes were concerned. Two men rendered valuable service by removing Miss Henderson, who was lying ill in her bedchamber during the progress of the fire. The inmates of the houses in the block betrayed the greatest excitement when the fire was first discovered. It appears that Mrs. Klinker, whose shop is adjacent to that occupied by Messrs. Adams & Co., was sitting at the saloon window when the alarm was first spread, her attention being drawn by several lads who were rushing down the street. Mrs. Klinker thereupon fled to the rear of the premises, when on looking

through a back window she observed flames issuing from the roof of the back part of the premises belonging to Mr. Henderson. Mrs. Klinker then called her husband and fainted away. The room in question contained several parcels of boots and shoes, to save which Mr. Klinker got through the window and entered the store, saving two parcels and sustaining considerable injury to his neck. The stock consumed consisted of two bundles of boots. The back windows of Klinker's premises were smashed, and the floors of the rooms deluged with water received from the hose at the back, but beyond the wetting no damage was done to Mr. Klinker's premises. Mr. Pearson, late officer of the Manchester Fire Brigade in England, actively co-operated with the firemen from Norwood, who arrived on the scene about a quarter to 10 o'clock. The flames appeared to be confined principally to the premises used by Mr. Henderson, the confectioner, and Messrs. Rushton & Just. The factory belonging to Mr. Henderson, at the rear of his shop and adjacent to Messrs. Rushton and Just's, was completely gutted. It consisted of a two-storey building composed of galvanized iron and wood, and consisting of two rooms. Besides the plant used in the manufacture of confections, a large stock of sugar and sweetmeats in various stages of preparation, as well as a large stock of goods ready for the market, were damaged or destroyed. On the ground floor were several furnaces used for the purpose of boiling sugar, built of brick, and containing chimneys running up to the upper floor, and continued on to the roof. From this spot the flames passing through a window communicated with the dwelling-house, and consumed the floor and contents of a bedroom. The bulk of the damage was effected in the premises of Messrs Rushton and Just, whose loss is very considerable; the value of the negatives lost or damaged being over £230. Amongst the negatives lost was one of Mr. J. E. Redmond, M.P., it being the only one in the colony; and amongst those injured by the water was one of Mr. M. H. Madge. On its loss being reported the ex-Alderman, who happened to be present, enquired anxiously for definite information on the point, and on it being made known in the hearing of the bystanders that the negative was indeed lost, a general burst of sympathetic laughter ensued. A member of the firm of photographers, by rushing into the building, managed to secure the books, and one of two valuable oil paintings which had been brought there for the purpose of being copied, a family portrait in oil being consumed. Of the contents of the operating-room the only articles saved consisted of the books, as already mentioned, and a few papers, The proprietors state that it is impossible to estimate the value of the property which they have lost. They estimate that the value alone of the negatives would not be covered by £230, which is the total amount of the insurance on the stock and fixtures. These were insured in the City Mutual. The building itself is insured in the Cornwall Insurance Office for £600. No combustibles were kept on the premises, as it has been the custom of the firm to photograph by the process known as the dry-plate. Mr. Rushton left the premises at 5 o'clock on Thursday afternoon, and his partner at a quarter to 6, when they state there was no sign whatever of fire in their or in any of the surrounding buildings. Mr. Henderson states that his stock, fixtures, and house-hold effects are insured for £1,000 in the South Australian Insurance Company's office, and that the landlord (Mr. Hornabrook) is insured. A Mrs. Rumbach, who occupies two rooms in Messrs. Rushton and Just's premises, states that her losses by the fire are considerable. Her effects consisted of furniture, wearing apparel, paintings, and jewels. These were insured for £300. Unfortunately she experienced a loss of £20 by a fire which occurred in the same place some time ago. Police-constables Carty and Avery were present soon after the smoke was first seen. They at once assisted in obtaining the reel at the rear of the Plough and Harrow, and helped to pass the hose through Henderson's shop. They then turned their attention to the

task of re-moving stock from the counter to the streets, being assisted in their efforts by several others. But it was found soon afterwards that the front shop was not threatened, and the goods were consequently returned. The fury of the flames was arrested about a quarter to 10 o'clock, and completely subdued by a quarter-past. Although the fire was limited to a small area, the loss was comparatively large, the damage done being estimated at nearly £2,000. The nature of the situation of the buildings touched was such as to cause alarm not only to those whose business is carried on in the corner block, but by a large number of people whose premises are in close proximity to it. It often happens that a fire originates just in the very place to which access is difficult. And such was the case to an extent in this instance. Besides being difficult to reach the flames at the start were dangerously near to buildings which, if they had fairly caught, would have probably rendered it a much more difficult task to subdue the fires. The success of the brigade yesterday may be attributed to the action of Captain Moore in operating directly on the seat of the flames instead of allowing his men to play the water uselessly over the top of the building. As a body, both the police and the firemen displayed a praiseworthy activity on the occasion. The fact of the hose bursting in five different places is one which calls for attention at the hands of the authorities. The defect is attributable either to the old worn-out nature of the hose, or to the method of its treatment at the hands of those who use it. It is an unmistakable fact that the hose when in use is too frequently drawn thoughtlessly, if not carelessly, across sharp galvanized iron roofs and the like. This is a fault from which our firemen are not free, and one which Captain Moore will no doubt remedy. At the same time it is urgently necessary that hose of the best description should be introduced for the use of our brigades, and that old played out material should be for ever cast aside. Another defect hostile to the proper organisation of the fire brigade is the want of a central station. Much trouble, inconvenience, and loss of time, and sometimes of life and property too, would be obviated if the central depot were placed in the neighborhood of the police-station. And it would be a further advantage if a telephonic system of communication, independent of the present circuit, were placed at the disposal of Captain Moore. By the present system false alarms are frequently given to the brigade superintendent, and a good deal of unnecessary trouble caused. In the case of the fire yesterday telephonic communication was not of the least use in conveying the intelligence to Captain Moore, who was fetched to Rundle-street, not by means of the telephone, but in a cab sent for the purpose. Now that a season of fires appears to have commenced in Adelaide, it will become necessary not only to remedy these defects, but to consider the question of the desirability of enlarging and strengthening the brigade sufficiently to enable it to cope with two or more fires of large magnitude occurring simultaneously.

Later Particulars.

Upon inspecting the injured premises on Friday morning we were able to ascertain the following fresh particulars respecting the fire that occurred on Thursday night in Rundle-street. From the appearance of the burnt rooms, coupled with information supplied to us by a fireman named Powditch, who it appears was the first member of the brigade on the scene, there seems to be little doubt that the fire originated in an upper room on Mr. Henderson's premises, used as a sort of storeroom for confectionery. This room immediately adjoins the photographic studio of Messrs. Rushton & Just, and it is probable that after the fire had made head-way and consumed some of the boxes and sweetmeats in the room referred to the flames got hold of the wooden apparatus in the adjoining operating room,

and having plenty of inflammable material to work upon completely gutted the latter establishment in a very short space of time. Mr. Powditch informs us that the first intimation of the conflagration reached the No. 1 reel station through the cries of a small lad, who was observed by him running in the direction of Rundle-street, calling out "fire." Upon looking from the verandah of the station he at once observed some smoke, and, calling to his mate McDuggal, the hose was immediately taken out, and in less than three minutes from the time he heard the alarm water was brought to bear upon the spot whence the smoke was issuing. Meanwhile Mrs. Shaw was telephoning for her husband, and the other reels, as described in our first report, were soon on the spot. With reference to the bursting of the hose attached to No. 1 reel in five places, we are informed that it only burst in two places, and that this accident is attributable not to any imperfection in the hose, but owing to the interference of several of the bystanders, who in their eagerness to assist in subduing the fire lifted and dragged the hose about in all manner of ways, and so caused the ruptures referred to. Had the hose been left to the firemen, and allowed to trail in the usual way, it would probably not have given way at all. The fire has destroyed nearly all the confectionery in the back part of Mr. Henderson's manufactory, but the machinery, though slightly scorched, is not permanently injured. In the back warehouse of Messrs. Adams & Co., in which several large trunks of boots suffered no more injury than a slight ducking, a large skylight was accidentally smashed to pieces by a constable who was on the roof, and who stepped on to it not knowing, owing to the smoke and darkness, that it was there. He just saved himself by catching hold of the iron roof, and so escaped almost miraculously, for had he fallen through, he would, as the drop would have been a long one, have suffered very serious if not fatal injury. But for the bursting of the hose above mentioned it is probably that the conflagration would never have extended beyond the room in which it originated, but from all accounts it is only fair to the authorities to state that neither was the hose an old one in disrepair, nor was its bursting in any way attributable to carelessness or ill usage on the part of the firemen. The molten sugar and sticky pools of now liquid sweetmeats rendered our morning inspection of the gutted confectionery establishment anything but an easy task, and we would recommend jurymen, insurance office representatives, and others who maybe called upon to visit the scene to habituate them-selves in such boots and trousers as they possess best adapted to withstand the glutinous ordeal. Considering the inflammable nature of the adjoining premises, the owners are to be congratulated upon the speedy and efficient manner in which the conflagration was subdued, and great praise is due both to the fire brigade and to those individuals through whose united efforts a fire, which might have been of the most serious character, was stopped. We learn that in addition to those previously mentioned as sufferers by the fire, considerable damage was done to the premises of Mr. R. P. Ridge, jeweller, of Pulteney-street, who lost all his working tools, and who is not insured.

The premises occupied by Mr. Henderson, of which Mr. Hornabrook is landlord, are insured in the South Australian Insurance Company's Office for £500.

The Superintendent of the Fire Brigade acknowledges the great assistance rendered by the police in keeping back the crowd, thus facilitating the operations of the firemen.

South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Saturday 17 February 1883, page 6

THE FIRE AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

The enquiry into the cause of the fire which occurred at Government House on Monday, February 12, was continued by the city coroner (Mr. T. Ward), at the Bristol Tavern, Franklin-street, on Friday, February 16. Mr. Ballingall was foreman of the jury. P.C. McShane said on the day of the fire he was in the guardroom at the gates of Government House. About 6.30 the sentry on duty called his attention to smoke issuing from the south side of the roof of Government House. He ran down to the house, and went into it and searched for the fire, but could see no sign of it. Afterwards found the roof of the building on fire over the south hall. Called the servants and alarmed them, and they got the hose reel out. The brigade came up, and witness left to show them the nearest plug. Witness knew that some workmen were at work on the roof of the house that day. Sent for other reels, and went and re-ported to the station officially. At 6.15 witness went on his usual beat round the building, but there was no sign of fire. Did not know how the fire originated. Bridget Broderick, upper housemaid at Government House, said she first heard of the fire from McShane. Went out into the back verandah and saw the smoke coming from the roof over the strawberry and large blue rooms. Witness went upstairs to see whether the fire had burnt through the ceiling, but it had not. Called out to the people in the house to get out the fire reel, which they did. The fire brigade then arrived. Some men were working upstairs that afternoon. Witness asked them when they would be finished, and a boy said he did not know. During the afternoon a boy came to witness for some matches, but she did not give him any. The fire seemed to have originated near where the plumbers had been at work. Joseph Stead Merton, an orderly at Government House, said at about 6.45 saw smoke issuing from the roof of the house. Witness immediately went up into the house and got up through a trap-door, and saw smoke and fire on the roof over the straw-berry room. Called to the gardener to get a ladder and get on to the roof. He drew the hose on to the top of the building and played on to the fire. Pulled up the slate so as to get at it more easily. Got the fire partly under, and the brigade reels then arrived, and witness gave up the reel to them. Saw some workmen's tools on the building. There was a lead pot on the roof, but it was cold. There was also a bag of charcoal directly over the spot where witness thought the fire started. The charcoal was hot and also wet. Was of opinion that the fire was started by the workmen on the roof. The bag that contained the charcoal was not at all burnt, but it was very hot. The roof on which witness was standing gave way. Joan Holmes, under-gardener at Government House, said that about 6.30 on the evening in question his sister called his attention to smoke on North-terrace. He ran up to the back of Government House, which he found to be on fire. The smoke issued from the centre of the north wing close to the parapet. He ran at once for the hose, and turned on the water. He was accompanied by the butler and the orderly, Merton. Played with the hose on the roof with Merton's assistance. The brigade came, but not until the fire was well got under. The plumbers' tools were on the roof. They were lying in the gutter close to the fire. Did not know that any person was working on the roof just before the fire took place. Had seen men there on the day before. Could not say how the fire started. It might have happened by accident. Thos. Hawkins, butler at Government House, said he first heard of the fire at 6.30 p.m. on Monday. Was told by one of the sentries at the gate. Was having tea at the time. Went out on the lawn and saw that the fire was on the north side of the building. The smoke was coming from the roof. The workmen were all gone. Saw no one in the garden. Then told the female servants. Discovered the fire was raging over the strawberry-room. Holmes came up and with his assistance took out the reel and began playing the water on the roof. The brigade then came up, and the fire was put out. Had heard that some workmen had been on the roof. Could not

say what was the origin of the fire. Subsequently when the flames were extinguished went up on the roof and saw the plumbers' tools there. Knew no suspicious circumstances connected with the fire. There were four servants retained on the premises since Sir Wm. Jervois's departure. Ebenezer Jarvis, messenger at Government House, substantially corroborated the evidence given by the last witness, and added that when he went into the house after helping the butler with the hose, he heard the fire crackling in the roof. The furniture was removed from underneath where it was supposed the fire was. When he left the premises at ten minutes past 5 on Monday evening everything appeared safe. Knew that there were plumbers on the roof that afternoon—a man and a boy. About ten minutes to 2 witness noticed a firepot on the roof with a large fire in it. It was standing on the parapet wall, near the late Governor's sitting room. It looked dangerous. Had no idea how the fire originated, but thought that it might have been caused by the fire in the pot on the roof which he had noticed during the afternoon. Edward Cato, plumber, in the employ of Mr. Fitzpatrick, said he was at work on the roof of Government House on Monday after-noon, February 12. A boy named O'Gormon was helping him. They were repairing the gutters of the roof, and had a firepot with charcoal fire in it on the roof. The pot was about three parts full. The pot produced was the one used. They were working on the portion of the roof which was burnt. Went to Government House about half-past 1 to commence work. Soon after they got there they lighted a fire in the firepot. Left about five minutes to 5 o'clock. The fire was put out at about ten minutes to 5 by the boy O'Gormon. Witness saw him put it out. He used water to extinguish it. Placed the pot in between the two roofs and put the fire out. Left it where they put the fire out. The firepot was left upon the roof that has been burnt and where they had been working. There was about 4 inches of lighted charcoal in the pot when the boy put it out. About a quarter of an hour before they left they had been using two plumber's irons. The irons were left upon the parapet. There was not enough heat in the irons to cause a fire. Was not sure where he left the irons. The metal pot was taken off the fire about twenty minutes before they left. The metal pot contained solder, but they never let it get hot enough to cause a fire. It was left upon the parapet. During the early part of the afternoon witness was smoking a pipe while on the roof. He lighted his pipe from the firepot with some chips of wood. The boy O'Gormon did not smoke. Witness was standing close to the boy when he put the fire out, and he did not notice any fire in the pot after wards. O'Gormon used about three parts of a bucket of water to put the fire out. The bottom of the firepot was quite good. It must have been burnt in the fire to destroy it as it is at present. The pot produced was a safe one to take upon the roof of a house if looked after properly. There was no wood exposed on the roof where witness was working—only slate and lead guttering. He could not say positively that there was no fire left in the pot, but it appeared to be all right when he left. By the Architect-in-Chief—The chips which he lit his pipe with he cut from the sole of the gutter. As the firepot rested on the two sides of the roof there was a space of about 7 inches underneath it. By the coroner—If the fire in the pot was not put out it would have had to pierce the slates and lead guttering before it could touch the wood. By the jury—There was a slight wind blowing on the day he was working on the roof. The ventilation holes in the bottom of the pot were large enough to admit of small coals falling through. The charcoal after being extinguished was not emptied with the bag. When he left the firepot it was not broken as now. He carried matches with him. Never sent the boy O'Gormon to the house-maid for matches. John O'Gorman, 14 years of age, said he was working with Cato at Government House on Monday, February 12. The fire produced was the one they used at Government House. Lit the fire about 2 o'clock. Filled it about three

parts with charcoal. Lit it with shavings and paper. The pot was at the south-west corner when he lit it. The fire was kept in the pot till about ten minutes to 5. Witness put it out with some water before he left. The fire-pot was standing between the two roofs when he put the fire out, and it was left there. Did not rake the fire about after putting the water upon it to see if it was out. The holes at the bottom of the can were not so large as they are now. He thought that there were some cracks at the bottom of the pot, but could not say positively. Witness did not smoke, but Cato did that afternoon. Remember the housemaid calling out and asking how long they would be, and he told her he did not know. Asked her for matches and she said she had not any with her. He placed the irons which they had been using in water until they had done sizzling. The firepot was placed about 8 feet from the skylight. John Fitzpatrick, plumber said Cato & O'Gormon were in his employ. They were working at Government House on Monday, February 12, repairing the roof. Was not at Government House that day. Recognise the tools and pots as his. Thought the firepot was safe enough to take on the roof. The bottom of the pot was not in the condition it now is. On Saturday morning, February 10, saw it at Government House, and when it was removed it did not leave any cinders behind. Those were the kind of pots he always used for melting metal and heating irons, The pot in its present condition was not fit to be used. The action of the fire upon the pot would injure it. Richard Moore, superintendent of fire brigades, said he was called to the fire at Government House on Monday evening, February 12, about 6.40. On arrival they found the centre part of the roof on the north side in flames. Got to work at once with the hose inside the home up the staircase. The flames had a strong hold. By about 8 o'clock the fire was well in hand, and there was no further danger. Could not say where the fire commenced, but it was on the north side. Several gaspipes had melted, and the gas was burning. The pipes were plugged up. After the fire was got under he went on to the roof, and was almost sure that he stumbled over the firepot produced, which was by the parapet. The fire-pot produced he did not consider a proper one to use. The fire, he thought, was caused through the use of an old nail tin as a firepot on the roof of the building. Lance-Corporal Hammill said he first heard of the fire at Government House at 6.45 on Monday, February 12. Went at once, and saw the roof burning. Got on to the roof, and saw some of the servants of Government House with a hose. The bulk of the fire was over the strawberry-room, and was extending east-wards. Went along the parapet where the plumbers had been working. The little metal pot produced and a bag containing some char-coal were on the parapet. The bag containing the tools was lying across one of the ceiling joists. Did not see the firepot at all. Did not think the firepot produced was a safe one to use on the roof of a house, not even if it was sound. Thought the fire was caused by the use of the imperfect firepot. The coroner, in summing up the evidence, said the fire at Government House had no doubt been caused by the use of the old firepot. The firepot was only used about an hour before the fire occurred, and he thought that the fire in the pot could not have been put out. He thought that they could say that the imperfect firepot had caused the fire at Government House. The jury returned the following verdict: -" We are unanimously of opinion that the fire that occurred at Government House on February 12 was caused by gross carelessness in using an old nail can as a firepot. "They also expressed the opinion that Mr. Fitzpatrick should be censured.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 17 February 1883, page 33

FIRE IN WAYMOUTH-STREET

No sooner had the firemen done their work at Government House than their services were called to another fire which had broken out in a secondhand dealer's shop in Waymouth-street occupied by a Mr. T. Hodges. It was shortly before 9 p.m. that the outbreak was first noticed by a little girl, the daughter of Mr. Brown, butcher, who lives directly opposite to Mr. Hodges. She with a couple of playmates was on the footpath, and while looking across at one of the windows of Hodges's shop, which had dresses and fancy goods displayed in it, she noticed the flame of a gas-jet with no shade over it just behind the loose drapery suddenly catch a curtain hanging near it, and the whole window immediately became ablaze. The child at once called the attention of her father amongst others to the flames, and they rushed across, and getting buckets and tubs threw as much water as possible on the fire, which now began to spread quickly through the shop, which, though a pokey little place, contained a miscellaneous stock, comprising clothes, boots, jewellery, and fancy goods, &c., to the value, with furniture in the higher rooms, of about £1,000, according to the owner's account. Mr. Brown saw that the inmates were all safe, and other neighbours and volunteers rendering assistance by bringing all the buckets at hand into requisition, gradually overcame the fire ; and when the No. 4 Reel arrived, shortly after the No. 2, both from Government House, they found it unnecessary to lay on their hose. Thus in about half an hour the flames were mastered. Mr. Hodges at the time when the fire broke out was in the stable, Mrs. Hodges was upstairs in her bedroom, and her mother, Mrs. Martin, with the children, was in the dining-room, which is just off the shop. Mrs. Martin was about to pass through the shop into the street when she noticed the blaze near the window. It is her opinion that the gas from the jet near the clothes at the window must have lit something. This is probably beyond question, and there seems to be no reasonable room for doubt as to the origin of the fire. The official report, however, says tersely "Cause not known at present." The flames were kept entirely in the shop, which seems to be divided into two compartments, one being used as a sort of showroom. It was in this where the flames commenced. The goods in the place, judging from what could be seen by the dim light through the smoke, appeared to be pretty well spoiled, and a comparatively small amount of damage was done in the dining-room by the water. Otherwise the place is uninjured. The loss is pretty considerable, but there is an insurance of £400 on the stock, £200 on jewellery, and £250 on furniture and miscellaneous effects—£850 in all—the policies being on the City Mutual Fire Insurance Company. This, at any rate, Mr. Hodges says, but the official report puts it "Supposed Imperial." Mr. Hodges is a tenant of Mr. Ralph Raphael. The police were at the fire in force, and we may mention that Lance-Corporal Hammill, who had just previously been working hard at Government House, was also most assiduous here. At a quarter past 9 o'clock all danger was over, and the crowd gradually dispersed, leaving the detectives and Con-stable Avery in charge of the semi-charred partly soaked salvage.

The official report on the fire is to the following effect:—Situation of fire, Robe-terrace, Waymouth-street; occupant of property, Mr. Thomas Hodges; trade, secondhand clothes dealer; hour of call, 8.45 p.m.; construction of building, brick; extent of damage to building, slight; do. to contents, serious; contents insured for £800 in (supposed) Imperial; cause of fire not known at present. Remarks—The call was received while fire men were working at Government House; Nos. 2 and 4 and head-station fire-reels were immediately told off for the duty, and attended as quickly as possible.

South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Saturday 10 March 1883, page 10

THE FIRE AT TOWNSEND'S AUCTION MART.

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The adjourned enquiry into the cause of the fire which occurred at Townsend's Auction Mart, King William-street, on March 1, was resumed by the city coroner (Mr. T. Ward) at the White Hart Hotel, Hindley-street, on Friday, March 9. Mr. Bury watched the proceedings on behalf of the Colonial Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Fredk. Pellatt Townsend, of Lower Mitcham, auctioneer, said he had a fire in his inner mart facing Gresham-street, on March 1. Was informed of the fire when on the Mitcham car at about quarter past 11 p.m. Went to the spot at once. On the day of the fire witness left his office at about 6 o'clock, and returned about 8 o'clock to fetch his coat. Only went into his own office, which is situated on the southern side of the big door. Did not detect the smell of anything burning. Was only in his office two or three minutes. Was of opinion that the fire commenced in the inner mart, but could not say what part. Was not in the inner mart during the day, but presumed that the men were glueing furniture together and polishing. The glue had to be heated, but don't know how it was done; believe that they used a lamp. Thought that there were three or four men at work there. Had no idea that the men smoked in the mart; there was a standing order that smoking was not allowed. Witness had not the slightest idea of the origin of the fire. Was insured in the Colonial Mutual Office for £1,000. It was a floating policy for the stock in all the buildings. The stock at the time of the fire was worth more than £2,000. The insurance company pay the amount of damage as far as the policy covered it. There was no ill-feeling existing between witness and his employés. Mr. Cohen had a quantity of furniture in the inner mart which was insured separately, and was not affected by the floating policy. He only knew that from what Mr. Cohen had told him. By the Foreman —Mr. Cohen said he insured the furniture for £1,000 till the end of February, when he reduced it to £100, as he had sold about £600 worth of furniture there. Should think Mr. Cohen's stock at the time of the fire was worth about £600 or £700. There was no other separate insurance besides Mr. Cohen's. The floating policy had been reduced from £3,000 to £1,000 since his father's death. Under the lease of the building he paid the premiums on the policy. It was insured for £2,000. The other offices in the building were sub-let by him. His lease expired in about six months. Mr. Cohen's furniture was selling very freely, and they were getting above the reserve. Did not suspect the fire to be the work of an incendiary. Included the £400 worth of furniture belonging to Mr. Cohen in the £2,000 mentioned as the value of the stock in the whole of the building. Emanuel Cohen, merchant, living at the Semaphore, said he conducted his business at Mr. Townsend's inner mart, and kept a quantity of furniture there. The value of his stock in the store and mart was about £900. Previous to February 27 was insured for £1,000 in the London, Liverpool, and Globe Office. On that date he reduced the policy to £400. They had been reducing the furniture by sale. Was not glueing furniture together on the day of the fire. Left the store to go down by the quarter to 6 train to the Semaphore. There were no workmen in the store during the day. When witness left there were some men taking a case into the mart. For three days previous to the fire no glue was used. Holmes is storeman in the mart. Witness was a smoker, but since he had occupied the store had not allowed smoking in that place. His son was helping him in the store during the day. There were no visitors to the mart throughout the day, only a man about 12 o'clock, who brought some furniture, but he was not smoking. One of the pieces of iron of the door was bent in far enough to admit a spark from any one lighting a pipe in the recess. About 9 feet from the door there was a case, but it did not contain any inflammable substance. The coroner said that the case they saw was full of the most inflammable matter. From what he saw of the place after the fire thought that it started near the door on the right hand side. There was nothing in the building of a smouldering nature. Estimated his loss at about £800,

which was covered by a policy of £400, and expected to get about £330 from Mr. Townsend. Sales had been satisfactory of late, and his business fairly good. By the jury—His son did not smoke. There was about a third of a bottle of kerosine in the store. On the Tuesday before the fire the store was cleaned up, and the rubbish put into a case. Fredk. P. Townsend on being recalled said the amount of the claims received from the various owners was about £1,000. The salvage would have to be deducted from that amount. Philip Cohen, of the Semaphore, said he was working with his father at Mr. Townsend's store on the day of the fire. Did not use the gluepot that day. Witness did not smoke. The only person who entered the store that day was a polisher who brought in some goods. There was no fire, candle, or light used at all that day. Did not think that there were any matches kept in the store. Left about twenty minutes to 6. The storeman, Holmes, locked up the premises. His father had a large quantity of goods in the store. Did not know the value of them. but Mr. Townsend was selling some of them. Knew that his father was insured but did not know for what amount. Had not the slightest idea how the fire started. When witness left there was no smell of fire. There were some men from Shierlaw's taking a case into the store just as he was leaving. Stephen Holmes, storeman to Mr. Townsend, said he never used a gluepot in the inside mart. Had seen the men use the glue-pot, but not for some time before the fire. Did not see the men use the gluepot on the day of the fire. No matches were used in the mart. One of the doors to the store was bent in, which made an opening. The door had been so broken for about three weeks. Had never seen any burnt matches blown in through the broken door. On the day of the fire Mr. Cohen and one or two sons were working in the store. Did not smoke in the day time, and on the evening of the fire did not smoke in the store. Was the last one in the store, and when he left he locked it up. There was no smell of anything burning when he left. Only locked the doors leading into Gresham-street. Did not return to the office after he left at five minutes past 6. Had no idea how the fire started. Had been with Mr. Townsend for ten years and a few months, and since he had been with him there had never been a fire previous to the present one. Four of Shierlaw's men brought a case to the store about twenty minutes to 6. They placed it by Debney's office. None of the men were smoking. The front doors were locked by Mr. Searcy. By the foreman—The kerosine lamp was some times used for heating the glue. That was the only way they had to heat the glue. There was no communication with the roof from the front offices. No kerosine was kept in the inner mart. Had never seen the lamp used for anything but heating the gluepot. Philip Cohen, on being recalled, said the last two or three times they used the gluepot it was heated at the Exchange Hotel. Previously they used the lamp for warming the glue. Henry Wedemeyer, clerk at Townsend's, said on the day of the fire was not in the inner mart at all. His office was up stairs. Left just before 6, and Mr. Searcy and the store-man were there. There was no smell of fire then. First heard of the fire about twenty five minutes past 10, when in Hindley-street. Went at once to the back of the mart and saw through a hole in the door the place burning. When he first went to the fire found the front door fastened. Roffe Searcy, accountant at Townsend's, said their business was satisfactory. Was in the inner mart about a quarter to 6. Went to speak to the storeman and he was locking the back door. There was no sign or smell of fire then. Left the premises about five minutes past 6 by the front door. Kept a key of the front door. Did not lock the door, but left it open for the storeman. Knew nothing of the fire till the next morning. Had never heard any threats used by any one on the premises or any body else. Reginald G. Bosisto, draper, of Hindley-street, said he saw the fire break through the skylight of the inner mart about twenty-five minutes past 10. Ten minutes previously there was no sign of fire. Gave the alarm. Saw through the

door at the back that the fire was apparently burning most fiercely at the southern side of the store. Helped the firemen to subdue the flames. Joseph Deyer, agent for Mr. Ketzenstein, of Melbourne, said his master had a quantity of goods at Mr. Townsend's store, the value of which was about £700. About £125 worth of their goods had been destroyed. They were doing a pretty good business. Was last upon the premises about a quarter past 5. About 5 o'clock was in the inner mart, and all appeared safe. Never smoked during the day. Heard no remarks made of any suspicious circumstances about the fire. Any loss they had sustained they looked to Mr. Townsend to reimburse.

Martin Johnson, assistant at Shierlaw's, said on Thursday evening, March 1, he with three others took a case of furniture into Mr. Townsend's store. They were about five minutes on the premises, and during that time a person walked through. This was about half-past 5 or a quarter to 6. None of the men were smoking. The case of goods they took into the store belonged to Mr. Dowie, and was valued at about £50. By the Foreman—When they left the store was open. James A. Cayley, messenger at the English and Scottish Bank, and living on the premises of the bank, said about twenty minutes past 10 he heard a crackling noise and at once ran to the window that looked into the building. The fire seemed to be in the centre of the room. A man could not get from the window he looked out of on to the roof of the building. Fire could not have been communicated to the store from the window. Mr. Townsend recalled, stated that Katzenstein claimed £125 6s. The reserves placed upon the burnt goods amounted to £114 1s. They had sold a lot of goods at the reserve price. Abraham Abrahams, chairman of the Fire Brigades Board, said he was at Townsend's fire soon after it broke out. Three reels were on the spot. Wedlock was in charge of the brigade. The firemen worked energetically. Thought that the contents of the inner mart were all in a blaze before the fire was noticed. All was done that could be done to extinguish the fire. The coroner, in summing up, said he regretted not being able to get evidence to arrive at the origin of the fire. There was nothing in the evidence to lead them to think it occurred in a suspicious way. Mr. Townsend and Mr. Cohen had both shown that they were losers by the fire. He thought that there was no evidence to show that the fire was maliciously started. It had also been shown that there had been no carelessness in the building. The only thing that he could think of was that the galvanized iron door that had a hole in it was close to a corner which afforded a shelter to any one lighting a pipe, and that a spark had been blown into the building. Even in the case of a person passing by with a pipe, a spark could have been blown from it into the building. He thought that the man who looked after the place ought to have drawn his master's attention to the broken door. There was another way in which the fire could have been started, viz., by boys sitting on the steps smoking and playing with fire. The jury returned the following verdict:— "We are of opinion that there is no evidence to show how the fire originated or to inculcate any person. We are quite satisfied with the straightforward manner in which the witnesses gave their evidence."

Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Wednesday 11 July 1883, page 2

THE FIRE BRIGADES BILL.

A curious blunder in the Fire Brigades Act of last session gives occasion for two out of the three clauses contained in the "Fire Brigades Amendment Bill." The Act of last year required all Insurance Companies "now carrying on business of insuring, or which shall hereafter carry on the business of insuring against loss or damage by fire," to register within thirty days after the passing of the Act. New Insurance Companies would have a difficult task before them if

such a provision were enforced. They would have to register before they were formed, thus emulating the smartness of the Yankee reporter who could take down a speech five minutes before it was delivered. Hence the necessity for an alteration in one clause of the Act, making it only incumbent on such Companies to register within thirty days after formation ; and for a new clause releasing recently formed Companies from the penalties which the Legislature has by mistake attached to the non-performance of the impossible. Another clause extends the operation of the Act to District Councils besides Corporations. But the main difficulty created by last year's Act remains entirely untouched. As we have several times pointed out, that measure places many towns in a worse position than they were previous to its passing. The Fire Brigade plant belonging to the Insurance Companies or Corporations under the old arrangement is handed over to the Adelaide Board. There is thus no protection against fire in several towns where hitherto the self-interest of the Insurance Companies, if nothing else, was some guarantee of precautionary care. Now, however, the Insurance Companies, who have to pay three-sixths of the total outlay, will naturally let their private brigades become extinct. The Municipalities and District Councils, of course, have the remedy in their own hands, if they like to contribute one-sixth. But in the meantime the people of any backward Corporation or District are exposed to the risk of fire, without having even the same safeguards as they formerly possessed.

South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Thursday 27 September 1883, page 5

THE FIRE BRIGADES BILL.

TO THE EDITOR.

I am, &c., ARTHUR JNO. BAKER, Late Superintendent of Fire Brigades of South Australia.
September 26, 1883.

Sir—Re Fire Brigades Bill now before Parliament—In the debate I see my name has been used as an authority. Will you kindly allow me to explain why I consider the schedule of charges should be altered, and to state that the proposed alteration of the scale of charges will not in any way affect the fees or salaries of the firemen or persons engaged to work at fires, as they are engaged by the board under special agreement and rules and regulations for the guidance of the superintendent and permanent brigade, and also for the auxiliary foremen and firemen at the other stations. Fires or no fires the brigade has to be paid to drill the firemen and keep the plant in working order, and to hold themselves ready to turn out when called night or day. These fire brigade expenses are paid for by the public and the fire insurance companies, one half each—so that every ratepayer pays his share through the Government and the corporation. There-fore, any ratepayer has as perfect a right to run the risk of loss from fire as the fire insurance companies have to take or refuse a risk. The present schedule of charges was framed by me in 1862, previous to which time the fire insurance companies had to provide all the plant and pay all expenses at fires, whether the property was insured or uninsured. Now— 1883—the public through the Government and the corporation pay one half the expense, and the Adelaide Fire Brigade costs £1,600 per annum—fires or no fires. The plant and brigade being paid for by the public, they should have the use of it in cases of fire on same terms as the fire insurance companies, who only pay one half. For the reasons above stated no man should be made to pay for the use of the fire brigade because his property is uninsured, therefore the schedule of charges should be altered as proposed by Mr. King, so that the board could only charge the fees for the auxiliary fire-men's time, " together with any additional expenses reasonably incurred by the

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fire brigade in attending to extinguish the fire on any uninsured property." as provided for in clause 35 of Act No. 273 of 1882—(see Mr. Baker's evidence before the select committee, September, 1882, question 192, page 16). That scale of charges was too high, as under the old scale of charges the board can claim from a person whose property was uninsured, and should the uninsured property not be worth £20 he would have to pay the board as under:—Superintendent, 1 hour, £1 1s. ; 4 reels and fire escape, 5 at 50s. each, £12 10s.; 16 firemen at 5s. each, £4 ; cleaning and drying 5 reels and escape, at 15s. each reel, £3 15s. ; 4 horses taking reels to and from fire, at 10s., £2 ; 3 prizes, £3 3s., £2 2s., and £1 1s., £6 6s.; notice of fire to superintendent, 10s. 6d.; notice to each reel station, 10s.; extra labor, 2s. per hour. Total £30 12s. 6d. The proposed scale would strike out superintendent's time and charges for use of plant, the cleaning of plant, the three prizes, and notice to the reel stations ; each and all being connected by telephone only one notice should be paid for. Thus reducing the above heavy charges under present scale from £30 12s. 6d. to £6 10s. 6d, for one hour's work at any fire.