

Adelaide Fire Brigade 1902

From the Sands and McDougall Directory for 1902.

Metropolitan Fire Brigade Station, Wakefield Street, Booker, G. A, superintendent fire brigades S.A.

North Adelaide Fire Brigade Station, O'Connell Street, Gustav Luck, in charge.

Norwood Fire Brigade Station, Parade, South side, Stephens, H. N, in charge.

Unley Fire Brigade Station, Edmund Street, North side, Oldham, Chas, foreman.

Port Adelaide Fire Brigade Station, Commercial Road West side, Hedger, H. H, foreman in charge.

Semaphore Fire Brigade Station, Hall Street and Jagoe Street, Goddard, F. H, foreman in charge.

Glenelg Fire Brigade Station, Sussex Street, —McDonald, Geo, fireman-in-charge.

Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade Station No 1, Hindmarsh place, N side.

Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade Station No 2, Ninth Street, N side.

Gawler Fire Brigade Station, Lyndoch road, Morgan, Hy, foreman.

<p>FIRE BRIGADES BOARD. Under Act 495, 1890. Members for 1901—T. H. Smeaton, Esq, J.P., (Chairman); W. D. Ponder, Esq, J.P.; C. L. Meyer, Esq, J.P.; A. J. Packer, Esq; J. H. Chinner, Esq; Alex Mackie, Esq, J.P.; C. G. Rebbeck, Esq, J.P.</p>	<p>Superintendent—Geo A. Booker, J.P. Secretary—F. W. Bristowe Offices—Brookman's Building, Grenfell st Head Station—Wakefield st Branch Stations—North Adelaide, Port Adelaide, Glenelg, Semaphore, Gawler, Kapunda, Moonta, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Norwood, Kadina, Unley</p>
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Sands and McDougall 1902

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 27 January 1902, page 4

KILLED BY A FIRE REEL.

At about 8.40 p.m. on Saturday, while the North Adelaide reel was proceeding into town, whither it had been called on a false alarm of fire at the Old Colonists' Hotel, in Angas-street, an accident occurred, resulting in the death of Michael Mc-Inerney. Deceased was walking along the road just on the north side of the City bridge, when he was knocked down by the reel. A fireman was left in charge of the injured man, and he was conveyed to the Adelaide Hospital by the police. An examination was made by the resident medical officer, Dr. Frances Snow, who pronounced life to be extinct. Deceased, who was about 70 years of age, resided at Finnis-street, North Adelaide. An eye-witness states that the firemen attempted to attract the man's attention by shouting to him, and drew the horses right back on to their haunches in the endeavor to prevent the accident. An inquest will be held at the Elephant and Castle Hotel this morning at 10 o'clock.

Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 1 February 1902, page 34

FIRE REEL FATALITY.

The City Coroner (Dr. Ramsay Smith) held an inquest at the Elephant and Castle Hotel on Monday on the body of Michael McInerheney, of Finnis-street, North Adelaide, who was run over and killed by a fire reel on Saturday night. Mr. P. McM. Glynn watched the proceedings

on behalf of the family of deceased, Mr. Rae for the police, and Superintendent Booker for the Fire Brigades Board. Cornelius McInerhoney, farmer, of Murat Bay, identified the body as that of his late father, who was about 62 years of age. Deceased was a retired farmer, and had come to Adelaide a few days before January 25, in order to stay in the city a few weeks. Annie McInerhoney, daughter of deceased, said she was with her father on Saturday night on the North Adelaide side of the City-bridge, King William-road. They were walking towards the city, and went across the road. When in about the centre of the roadway her attention was attracted by the galloping of horses, and then she noticed a fire reel 4 or 5 yards off. The reel was coming from North Adelaide towards the bridge. Witness called out to her father, who ran one or two paces to get out of the way of the horses, which ran right over him with the vehicle at full speed. There was no attempt to pull the horses up. Witness thought if the horses had swerved to the Walkerville side of the road her father's life would have been saved. Gustave Luck, foreman of the North Adelaide Fire Station, said that at the time of the accident Ernest Laing was driving the horses. On the reel nearing the bridge witness saw a man and woman in the middle of the road, apparently crossing from east to west. The two people halted. The woman drew back, while the man went on. The firemen shouted out, and applied the brake, but the pole head struck the man on the side. He fell under the near-side horse, bringing the animal on its knees. Immediately after the reel had passed over the man's body they succeeded in pulling the horses up. Ernest Alec Laing, who was driving the reel at the time of the accident, gave corroborative evidence. As soon as he saw deceased he called out, and at once applied the brakes. By Mr. Glynn— The reel was proceeding at the rate of about 12 to 14 miles an hour. Witness always checked the speed of the horses in passing over the City-bridge to a certain extent. If he had pulled to the off side he firmly believed the horses would have run over and killed the woman. Constable O'Donnell, who was on the bridge at the time of the, accident said that the horses in the reel had been almost pulled up when the man was knocked down. Witness had deceased taken to the hospital in a cab, but on arrival there he was found to be dead. The jury, after a brief retirement, returned a verdict of 'Accidental death.'

Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 18 March 1902, page 4

A NEW FIRE ENGINE.

The following letter from the Fire Brigades Board was read to the City Council on Monday afternoon:— "I have the honour by direction of the board to ask whether in the event of the other contributories being willing to provide their proportion of the funds necessary for the purchase, equipment, and maintenance of an additional and more powerful steam fire engine for the City of Adelaide, your council will also be willing to contribute their proportion. The estimated additional expenditure which, would be incurred by the above is for the first year £1,502 10s., and £577 10s. per year thereafter.— F. W. Bristowe, secretary." The council decided to reply that no funds were available for the purpose referred to.

Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 22 March 1902, page 3

SOLDIERS AT THE FIRE BRIGADE STATION.

On Friday evening, at the invitation of Lieut. Booker, members of the field artillery and representatives of the infantry and other branches visited the fire brigade station, and spent an instructive evening. The visitors entertained the firemen at light refreshments, and the latter edified the soldiers with an inspection of the apparatus at the station. The reels were called out for the benefit of the visitors, who were astonished at the rapidity and precision with which the movement was carried out. Everything was in "as you were" order again within four minutes of the sounding of the alarm. The City Volunteer Band, under Bandmaster Hodder discoursed music during the evening.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Tuesday 22 April 1902, page 7

AN ALARM OF FIRE.

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

The Adelaide, North Adelaide, and Unley fire reels were turned out on Monday shortly before 6 pm., in response to an alarm given from in front of the G.P.O. The fire was at the house of Mr. W. H. Carpenter, South-terrace west, and the messenger who rang for the brigade consequently passed several alarm-posts en route to the post-office. No damage was done save the burning of a curtain, and the services of the brigade were not required.

Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Thursday 22 May 1902, page 3

A BIG FIRE.

PRITCHARD'S BUILDING GUTTED.

GREAT EXCITEMENT IN THE CITY.

TWO MEN INJURED.

Between a quarter and 10 minutes to 10 on Wednesday evening, when few people were abroad, an alarm of fire was raised, and the cry flew as speedily through the city as the flames spread in the building where the outbreak occurred. Two representatives of The Register were working in the big reporters' room on the extreme eastern side of the office. They heard a strange crackling noise, and on glancing up from the work on which they were intent a lurid light caught their eyes. They looked at each other and said "Fire!" Rushing down the passage way somebody all excitement and out of breath collided with them and gasped out—"The place is on fire." It was all so sudden that one's heart stopped beating. The alarm was given, people flocked to the spot, and by 10 o'clock hundreds of eyes were rivetted on Pritchard's two-storied building, which is situated to the east of Cowra Chambers in Grenfell street. The front was soon alight, the window being a blaze of fire, the glass was heard to crack, flames broke out, and sparks lit high to heaven. People were rushing in from all directions. The shouting was something to be remembered. The linotype men at The Register left their machines in hot haste, and, with other willing employes, clambered out on to the roof, got the office hoses to work, and with splendid zeal and enthusiasm extinguished every spark that came in their direction. Members of Tattersall's Club, who had been lounging about on the cushions, forgot all about trying to pick the City and Birthday Cup double, and made a stampede to the big balcony. Foot and horse police arrived to keep back the rapidly growing concourse. The hammer of galloping hoofs, the rattle of flying wheels heralded the approach of the fire reel. A wild shout was raised as the brigade flew round the corner of Freeman street and dashed down Grenfell street. The crowd drew back and gave the firemen a cheer as they got to work. The bright brass helmets of Mr. Booker's men glittered and shimmered in the dazzling light of the lurid flames. This was about 10 o'clock. People flocked in from all parts of the city, while suburban residents, seeing the great reflection in the sky, left their homes to watch more closely the conflagration. The curtain had rung down at the Theatre Royal for the second interval, and the report flew like the wild fire itself that The Register Office was alight. Telephones were kept busy, and insurance secretaries hurried into the metropolis. It was a great sight. The flame tongues licked higher and higher, gigantic clouds of smoke, all bejewelled with flying sparks and coals of fire, were flung up with a furious roar into the cold, clear, bright night. Heads were out at windows; men ran along rooftops and the high walls of adjoining buildings, and their faces were lit up with a brilliancy that it is very seldom possible to witness. The fire engine gave forth its laborious thud-thud, the water was poured into the building, and still the flames flew skyward. To look into the building from the front reminded one of a colossal furnace. The play of light and colour was too wonderful to behold. As a bystander, all trembling with excitement, remarked, "It is like gazing into hell." Indeed, all the furies of the nether world seemed to be at work. People in the adjoining offices hurriedly collected their books and took them, together with safes, drawers, and cupboards containing valuables, into the street and other places of safety. The hoses poured their volumes of water into the burning, roaring, smoking ruin. In a little over half an hour the flames had travelled right through to the rear of the building. Ladders were got to work, more hoses were brought into requisition, and the water turned on here. A contingent of handy men

in blue arrived and put in good work. The flames broke through the top door and ventilator, but the fireman up on the insecure landing held on to his hose and poured a stream through the fast widening cracks, while his mate plied his hatchet and made a larger opening in the woodwork. The flames caught the pulley rope, which burnt in the twinkling of an eye. The iron pulley fell on to the asphalt, just missing somebody's head, while the burnt rope hung from the wooden beam. The members of the Stock Exchange Club crowded at their door, and watched with anxiety and interest the big blaze. The firemen were soaked with water, and the heat from the fire caused clouds of steam to rise from their clothing. The lanes were crowded with people. "Look out, the walls are falling." and they fell back to be out of danger. Firemen, naval men, and civilian volunteers worked as if they meant it, and ere long it was known that the fire would not get out of the one building. From that time the crowd started to dwindle away. Only those provided with passes were allowed to get through the cordon of police. Anxious spectators were Mr. Arthur Waterhouse, who only a few months ago purchased the building; Mr. H. C. E. Muecke, whose offices adjoin; and Mr. B. Basedow, the well-known winemaker employed by Messrs. Cholmondeley & Bosanquet at their cellars at Happy Valley. He and his brother saw the reflection from their home at Kent Town, and hurried into town, thinking that Messrs. J. Hill & Co.'s premises were on fire. Imagine Mr. Basedow's surprise when he arrived in Grenfell street and found that the fire was in the building the basement of which comprises the town offices and cellars of Messrs. Cholmondeley & Bosanquet. Mr. Cholmondeley only left for Melbourne in the afternoon. At the rear of the building Mr. W. Clark and Mr. George Aldridge, Chairman of the Stock Exchange, were watching the reflection as it illumined Brookman's Building. Mr. Clark said— "This is my last night in Adelaide, and I don't want to see my offices burnt down." But there was no fear of that. The firemen had the flames under control, and meant at all hazards to confine them to Pritchard's building, which ran through to the lane at the back. The danger was that Middleton's bend store would catch alight, and, as one of the customhouse officers' remarked, there was a wooden door lined with iron communicating from the burning building into the store, which contained a large quantity of spirits. At one time a few people held their breath, thinking that Cowra Chambers had caught alight. The flames burst out of a window in Pritchard's and, licking across the lighting area, seemed for a moment to catch one of the windows of Cowra Chambers, but quick as thought the wind blew them away again, and the woodwork was only singed. One of the firemen fell down into this area, and had his ankle broken, whilst a civilian who apparently tried to rescue him also lost his balance, and falling heavily sustained serious injuries.

—The Alarm.—

It was about ten minutes to 10 o'clock when the officers of the Naval and Military club and some of the passers by in Grenfell street first noticed a volume of flame shooting from the roof of Pritchard's premises, and almost immediately afterwards the alarm at the corner of Gawler place and Grenfell street was broken, and intimation conveyed to the fire brigade station. After the first flaring outbreak the flames leapt out from the roof with the suddenness and vigour of a bonfire, and the lurid glare which they cast on the surrounding buildings confused the people as to the real location of the conflagration. Grenfell street was lined by hundreds of people who chafed and grew impatient as they watched the flames fold their gaunt and fiery arms around the building, and still no fire brigade appeared. It is on occasions such as this, however, that every person thinks every second a minute. From the roof the fire had descended to the first floor, and the big open windows grew crimson as behind them the flames and smoke fought with everything they came in contact, and gradually overmastered all. There was a crash and the window fell in, just as the Metropolitan fire reel dashed up at 10 o'clock to the accompaniment of loud cheers from the spectators, who had increased to thousands. There was a hurrying and scurrying of brass helmets and the crowd gained confidence as they noted the preparations of the fire fighters. Within a few seconds the first hose had been connected with a waterpipe, and a second later two sturdy firemen piloted a stream of water through the broken window into the furnace-like regions beyond. Five minutes passed and up galloped the North Adelaide reel, while at the same time the large expansion ladder was erected in front of the burning edifice and the flames attacked from the stone

balustrade fronting Grenfell street. There was a hissing and gurgling as fire and water met in mortal opposition and clouds of smoke and ashes were swept westwards in the direction of the Register office. Two minutes more elapsed and Unley's firemen were also on the scene.

—The Scene in Grenfell Street.—

The street was soon covered by a net-work of hoses, crossing and recrossing one another, spouting water on the incautious bystanders, and pouring torrents on the destructive flames. Two big engines arrived puffing and grunting, and as they sucked the water from the veins of the city with an insatiable thirst they throbbed and smoked and sang to the fire a song of joyous defiance. "Puff, puff" and "rat tat" they shouted, and with every throb of their mighty bodies the water shot forth with the vigour of a conquering champion, and the vanquished flames disappeared in dense white clouds of steam and smoke. Three intrepid fire fighters—Cadet Napier and Firemen Bentley and Robertson—stood on the large ladder as it leant over the front wall, and from their coign directed an irresistible flow of water on the fire. And as they worked a treacherous tongue of fire thrust itself through the first story windows, and in a second the three men in blue were enveloped in the arms of the fiery besiegers. Two of them slid down the ladder with the agility of monkeys, but a cry of horror arose from the crowd as Napier was observed to be isolated, and apparently surrounded by a scorching army of multi-tongued sheets of flame. In a trice the firemen below brought the hose to bear on the dangerous spot, and a hearty cheer was given as Napier arrived from a cloud of smoke apparently none the worse for the adventure. Although the flames at this point of attack were quelled, the position of the firemen was decidedly unenviable, as dense volumes of vapour and smoke floated round them. In the meantime a strong posse of police had arrived on the scene, and the large assemblage of spectators were kept out of the fighting arena. After 10 or 12 minutes hosing there was a noticeable reduction in the volume and strength of the fire; a little later the remains of the roof left their fixings with a loud crash. It was not long before Superintendent Booker's men had the front of the premises well under control, but ominous clouds of fire and smoke arose from the centre portions. This abnormally large outburst quickly attracted the attention of the firemen, and the multitude cheered loudly as they perceived the determined efforts being made to check the conflagration. The sight of several "handy men" climbing nimbly up the ladder, and entering into the spirit of the conflict with the flames again aroused the spectators to applause, which was renewed as a strong contingent of "gentlemen in khaki" also advanced into the fighting line. Showers of sparks were falling from the doomed building, and for a time there was a fear that neighbouring establishments were also going to come within the grip of the fiery elements. Occasionally sheets of burning paper snared into the air, and careered about threateningly. But the firemen had assumed control, and with a masterful hand retained it. Thousands of firelit faces, extending from King William street to Gawler place, gazed on the work of suppression, and cheered each smart endeavour. The brigades made such rapid progress that all sign of live fire disappeared from the front of the building, and all that remained were a few char-red rafters supported by the stone walls. The hoses were lengthened, and the firemen further invaded the realms recently held by the destroying demon. The rungs of the big ladder, which held a commanding position, were lined by members of the contingent and local tommies, and the people appreciated their ready assistance. Back and back, the flames were thrust until they were focussed in the extreme rear of the edifice, and shone brightly in relief against the dark foreground of charred timber. Thence on the task of winning ground was lighter, though the risk involved to the firemen through danger of falling beams increased as time went on, and ominous cracks were heard aloft, presaging frequent falls of timber. By a quarter to midnight the superintendent was able to dispatch some of the reels back to their stations, and the few remaining signs of the conflagration were commanded to the relentless treatment of one hose and a fireman.

—Scene at the Rear.—

In a very few minutes the immense crowd in Grenfell street attained such proportions that latecomers were compelled to seek other points of vantage for sightseeing than the front of the building. Large numbers went around by McHenry street to the rear of the fire, thronged every avenue, and lined the roofs of the lower adjacent buildings. These had not long to wait for stirring incidents.

—A Couple of Accidents.—

The back portion of the premises soon caught alight, and willing hands responded readily to a call for volunteers to shift the hoses which began to net the narrow lane. It was only 10.15 p.m., or scarcely half an hour after the flames first appeared, before a thrill of horror passed along the crowd owing to the ominous call. "Ladders and lifelines, quick!" With difficulty the police restrained the anxious press of people while the required implements were being obtained. In a few moments, from the little alley at the west of the building, several bearers appeared supporting Senior Fireman John Edward Dickie, of the metropolitan station, who had fallen down a basement area. He was taken to a cab, and conveyed to the hospital. "Another cab!" was the next cry, and a sympathetic silence ensued as a party of firemen hauled a prostrate form out of danger by means of the rescue rope, and a civilian, Mr. Robertson, a son of the well-known minister of Stow Memorial Church, was borne, bleeding and almost unconscious, towards Pirie street. Dr. Hynes, who had been among the civilian workers, attended the man at his surgery, where his face was found to have been battered almost beyond recognition. For over an hour he lay between life and death. He was subsequently conveyed to Dr. Hynes's private hospital.

—From the Rooftops.—

The scene of the fire from the roof of Cowra Chambers was like a veritable glimpse into an inferno. A soft breeze fanned the flames persistently over the top of the building, and redhot cinders and large pieces of burning wood flew about in all directions. In spite of the ever-present danger, however, a willing staff of workers from The Register Office scrambled over the hot galvanized-iron roof, and from every possible point of vantage played hoses on the fire and neighbouring buildings. The ominous crackling of rafters, the loud thud of falling beams, and the continual smashing of broken glass were all forgotten in the ardour with which the volunteers worked. Standing on the dividing wall between the burning building and Cowra Chambers a reporter was able to look into the very heart of the conflagration. The thick smoke was almost blinding and the blaze gave out a terrible heat, but the sight was as fascinating as it was awful. Every now and then a large crossbeam hitherto untouched would be reached by the remorseless flames; a tremendous flare of light would shoot heavenwards; a cluster of sparks soar about like a multitude of falling stars; and a prolonged crash told its tale of devastation. Right below, through the choking smoke and flames, could be dimly discerned a number of firemen clambering and tumbling over burning refuse, but ever calling for "More water, more water," and plying the hoses everywhere. At about 10.40, long before the conflagration was subdued, a couple of glittering helmets showed up from the opposite wall, and a strong pressure of water was levelled at the Cowra Chambers side. The men on the roof of that place caught the full blast of the first pressure, and a wild rush was made for the windows and parapets of The Register Office. Although the workers were not afraid of the flames, they strongly objected to being rudely pushed about by a strong stream. The consequent undignified rout was not unattended by danger, and one man was disappearing gracefully through the Cowra Chambers skylight when a strong arm hauled him back to safety—and water.

—"A Spirit Above and a Spirit Below."—

When at 11 o'clock smoke issued from C. G. Middleton's No. 6 bonded store, next door, in Commercial street, a customs officer hurried to a fireman, and informed him excitedly that the first floor was filled with spirits, as was also the basement, and that a wooden door sheathed with iron communicated with the burning building from the top story. An assault was made on

the door leading to the staircase from the ground floor, and a hose run up, which was used with such effect that the fear of an explosion of the ardent spirits was soon dispelled.

—Statement by Superintendent Booker.—

When Superintendent Booker, of the Metropolitan station, returned home after midnight he was seen by a representative of The Register, to whom he made the following statement:— "At 9.55 p.m. calls were received from the Brookman's Building and Stephens place fire alarms, and a reel, steamer, and ladder were immediately turned out from the head station, and all the available help, which included North Adelaide, Norwood, and Unley, was concentrated into the city. Upon leaving the doors it was seen that the sky was illumined, and upon arrival in Grenfell street within two minutes it was found That Prichard's Building was well alight on all floors, and the fire was coming through the roof. It was quickly spreading to the southward. There was every danger of the fire reaching Middleton's bonded store, at the south-eastern corner of the premises where a large amount of spirits and tobacco and other merchandise was kept. In fact, were was every reason to suppose that Adelaide would have to have recorded one of the most severe fires it has had to chronicle. I must thank all those who rendered assistance, especially the members of the Naval Reserve and military forces, who were only too anxious to give us any help that lay in their power. The military were urged on to do their utmost by Brig.-Gen. Gordon and other officers of the land forces, and the naval men were systematically captained by the officer in charge. Chief Petty Officer Staples. I regret to place on record a casualty. In the the early stages of the fire my senior foreman. J. E. Dickie, met with a serious accident, which necessitated his being removed to the Adelaide Hospital. A civilian who was assisting was badly hurt. "We got to work in the front of the building with three lines of hose—two from the main on the north side of Grenfell street and the other from the main on the south side, near The Register Office. Seeing that the fire was making headway the two steam fire engines were got to work in Grenfell street, and four lines of hose were put in commission from the lane at the back and from Pirie street. The total number of men I had, exclusive of the volunteers, was 22. There was no hope to save the burning building, and my efforts were directed to avoid the destruction of the adjoining structures. It was impossible to save Pritchard's. As to the origin of the fire, I am unable to say anything. The men fought valiantly, and by 11 o'clock all danger of the conflagration spreading had passed. During the fire it was found that the top story of Middleton's bond was alight, but a line of hose quickly prevented the fire getting away in that direction. Very little damage was caused by the blaze in that store, but there was a certain amount of injury by water. It is impossible for me to estimate the total damage." —The Building.— The affected building has a frontage in Grenfell street of about 30 ft., and a depth of about 190 ft. to Commercial street. It has a freestone frontage, while the side and rear walls are of Glen Osmond dark stone. Only last November Mr. Arthur Waterhouse purchased the block from Paxton's estate. The righthand side and rear portion of the building were, occupied by Mr. Thomas Pritchard, the well-known importer, and the large window on the ground floor facing Grenfell street was utilized for displaying samples of his imported wares. On the lefthand side the Economic Dental Company. Messrs. H. R. Bosisto and T. A. Macklin, occupied a suite of rooms. Directly underneath these are situated Messrs. Cholmondeley & Bosanquet's, — Vale Royal Vineyard vaults, but the damage done to the cellars is thought to be very slight. About halfway down the building a dividing wall is situated, and this made the task of the firemen to cope with the enemy all the more difficult. —The Insurances.— Fortunately for those concerned, the building and stock are well insured, and, strangely enough, the policies are held in the Imperial Fire Insurance and the Alliance Fire Assurance Companies, which were recently amalgamated. The building is insured for £1,000 in the Imperial Fire Insurance Company, Cowra Chambers, of which Mr. C. H. Harris is manager; whilst the stock is well insured in the Alliance, of which Mr. L. A. Jessop is manager. The cellars of Messrs. Cholmondeley & Bosanquet are insured in the National Fire and Marine Company for £350. The Colonial Mutual Fire and Accident Company has the insurance of all the firemen who hold appointments under the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, and the injured fireman Dickie will, of course, have a claim on Mr. Entwistle's company.

—A Graceful Offer.—

An anxious hour was spent in The Register office. From the moment that the flames first burst through the top of Pritchard's buildings, until close upon 11 o'clock, sparks fell repeatedly on the roof of the office. When the danger to The Register was at its height Rp. Sir Langdon Bonython, proprietor of The Advertiser, kindly offered in the event of the fire reaching the office to carry on the publication of The Register and its associated journals. The proprietors hasten to acknowledge the graceful offer.

—Firemen, Policemen, Soldiers, and Sailors.—

A varied assortment of uniforms was conspicuous among the helpers. The dark clothing and glittering helmets of the fire brigade and the official dress of the police force on foot and the troopers on white steeds are familiar; but on Wednesday night the ladders swarmed with men in khaki from the soldierly ranks of the Commonwealth Contingent, and the hoses were hauled along by the adept hands of navy men from H.M.C.S. Protector. These disciplined forces did good work.

—Collapse of a Steamer.—

During the height of the fire a single-cylinder steamer, stationed in Grenfell street, roared inordinately with escaping steam, and it proved that some of the tubes in the boiler had given way, rendering the machinery useless. It is stated that the boiler which thus collapsed was a new one that had been recently put in at a cost of £120.

—The Condition of the Injured Men.—

Enquiry at the Adelaide Hospital late in the evening elicited the information that Fireman Dickie was progressing as well as could be expected. He had sustained a compound fracture of the right ankle, and was suffering comparatively little pain. Dr. Hynes reported that the condition of Mr. Robertson had been very serious.

—How the Accident Happened.—

Said Dr. Hynes—"I happened to be an eye-witness of the accident. One of the suburban reels went along the side street to the west of the burning building, and asked for civilian help to run out the hose from the reel. I caught hold next to the fireman, who held the nozzle; Robertson was just behind me. The hose gave a kink, which nearly knocked me down. The fireman Dickie ran along just then with a lantern, and fell head over heels into the unprotected area. The other fireman and I ran back and secured two ladders from the engine, which, however, proved too short. I shouted to Dickie, "What is wrong with you?" and he responded, "I have broken my leg." I rushed round to Superintendent Booker, who sent two firemen and a lifeline, and when we returned Robertson, too, was lying in the area insensible. He had in endeavouring to assist the firemen fallen down upon his head, and after reaching my surgery lay with flickering pulse between life and death, and it was over an hour before he could be conveyed to my private hospital. There was no doubt Robertson was very brave, and did the best he could to assist the injured fireman. I am glad to say there is every probability now of his recovery."

—A Scene of Desolation.—

After the conflagration had been subdued Superintendent Booker detailed several firemen to guard against a possible further -outbreak. Members of the police force also patrolled Grenfell street through-out the night. Scores of people waited long after midnight to more closely inspect the ruins. The picture presented to them was anything but an encouraging one. It was all an endless tangle of twisted galvanized-iron roofing, smoked marble slabs, and smouldering woodwork.

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Thursday 22 May 1902, page 1

THE GRENFELL-STREET FIRE.

The Injured Men.

Progressing Favorably.

Dr. Hynes stated in response to enquiries on Thursday morning that Mr. Robertson, son of the Rev. Joseph Robertson, who was injured in the fire last night, is progressing very favorably under the circumstances. His face is considerably battered and bruised, but he passed a very good night. He is, however, still in a critical condition. He is at present at Dr. Hynes's Private Hospital. Senior-Foreman John Dickie, who also fell down the same lighting-well, was conveyed to the Adelaide Hospital. The authorities stated on Tuesday morning that, although he sustained a compound fracture of the leg, he is doing very well and is quite cheerful.

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Thursday 22 May 1902, page 1

Alarm at the Theatre.

At the Theatre Royal the glare was seen from the gallery stairs during the interval between the second and third acts, and some irresponsible and indiscreet individual rushed into the theatre calling "Fire." Fortunately the crowd inside had no time to get alarmed, for intelligence as to the location of the conflagration was immediately obtained. A large number of people, however, crowded on to the stairs to catch a glimpse of the blaze. This sudden movement in the gallery caused many wondering glances to be cast aloft from the circle and stalls, where the cry of "Fire" had not been heard.

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Thursday 22 May 1902, page 1

Mr. Smeaton Interviewed.

Wants of the Brigade. Inadequate Appliances.

Mr. T. H. Smeaton (chairman of the Fire Brigades Board), when interviewed on Thursday, with regard to the comments in "The Advertiser," regarding the urgent necessity for increased equipment for the brigade, said:—"Yes, we do want increased equipment, and want it badly ; and want it now. We have wanted it for the last 10 years, but more especially during the last five years. 'Block risks' have been increasing during the last few years at such a rate, and our equipment not having increased in proportion to them we, who are charged with the protection of life and property, have felt as though the sword of Damocles was constantly hanging over us. We have an illustration of the absolute danger in the present fire. On one side of it is Cowra Chambers—a large and expensive building erected within the last few years; on the other side Cavendish Chambers and Brookman's Building, both very costly structures, and the whole so closely packed together that nothing but the very highest class of firemen's work could have saved the block, and consequently the immense amount of money which it represents. That is from a brick-and-mortar point of view, but when we come down to the more vital question of life-saving one can't find words to adequately express the danger of the situation, and the helplessness of the fire brigade to cope with it. The work of the brigade on Wednesday night was a marvel of good judgment, daring, and duty. With the small number of men —24 in all—and some of these men on leave, to adequately combat a fire from both ends, as it had to be done, was almost an impossibility. Had it not been for the timely assistance of a small section of the Naval Brigade, and a number of our local military forces and the contingent, the work could not possibly have been done. We are not sufficiently manned even for ordinary occasions, and for such an occasion as this—well, the less said about it the better."

Why doesn't the Fire Brigade Board employ more men? "For the simple reason that we haven't funds at our disposal to do so. Our expenditure is not controlled by the necessities of the situation, but by an Act of Parliament drafted 10 or 12 years ago, which regulates our

expenditure by an income based upon a contribution of £666 13/4 a quarter from the Adelaide Corporation, which sum is 2-9ths of the total amount contributed by the Government, the fire insurance offices, and the Adelaide Corporation."

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Thursday 22 May 1902, page 1

The Insurances.

Mr. J. Ford-Yuill has been appointed to adjust the claimse against the insurance offices, and will commence his work at once. It was definitely ascertained on Thursday morning that the following insurances are in existence:—£1,000 on building of Pritchards premises in the Imperial Insurance Company, and £2,000 on stock in the same building, making a total of only £3,000. This does not represent the total value of the property, which has been almost totally destroyed. The property in the adjoining buildings is only, slightly damaged, and consequently those claims will only, aggregate a small amount.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Thursday 22 May 1902, page 4

WANTED, A FIRE ENGINE.

The fire which occurred in Grenfell-street yesterday evening once more emphasised the necessity of providing Superintendent Booker with more men and better appliances for effectively coping with a large conflagration. With the staff and the equipment at his command he works wonders. That was seen on the occasion of the destruction of Messrs. John Martin and Co.'s establishment a year ago, and the same fact was apparent on Wednesday. But in respect to each outburst there was an anxious half-hour or more, when it looked as though nothing short of a miracle could save the adjacent block from destruction. Only by what can almost be described as superhuman exertions was a much greater catastrophe averted in each instance. The contributories to the Fire Brigade ex-chequer have a right to demand loyal and expert service from the officers, and men for whose maintenance they provide. Invariably they get it. On the other hand, it is only reasonable to expect that they will do their utmost to supply the central station with everything that is necessary to cope successfully with the worst fire that is likely to occur in the crowded metropolis.

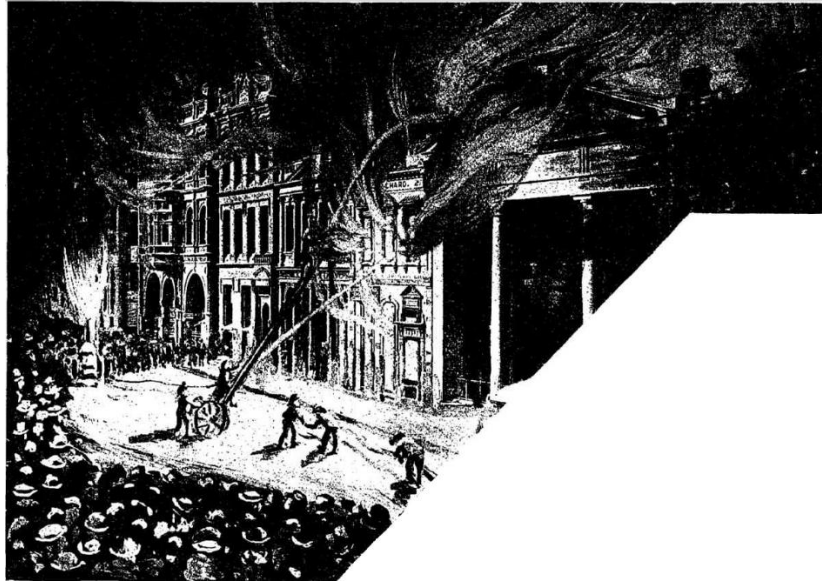
That has not been done.

For many months now Mr. Booker has been asking for an improved steam fire engine, capable of discharging at least 700 gallons of water per minute, and he has practically pledged his reputation to the assertion that without it the brigade will be powerless in the face of a conflagration which has obtained a firm hold of one of the chief Rundle-street blocks, for instance, and when a strong wind is blowing. Even with it the combined existence of such conditions as those mentioned would tax the energies of his splendid staff to the utmost. The amount required is but £1,000, a mere bagatelle compared with the sum which would be involved under the circumstances suggested. Yet the Government, although they have consented to the borrowing of the necessary amount, decline to advance it to the board on the security offered.

So the matter remains in abeyance. But for the excellent pressure of water, the absence of a strong wind, and the indefatigable labors of a well-directed brigade, yesterday's fire might have been infinitely more destructive than it was, and all because on a technical point the State could not provide the comparatively small sum asked for. The Government, the insurance companies, the Adelaide Corporation, and the other municipalities participating in its protection are responsible for the upkeep of the brigade. Surely between them they can manage to raise £1,000 to purchase the engine needed, whose presence would more than pay its capital cost at any big fire.

Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 31 May 1902, page 43

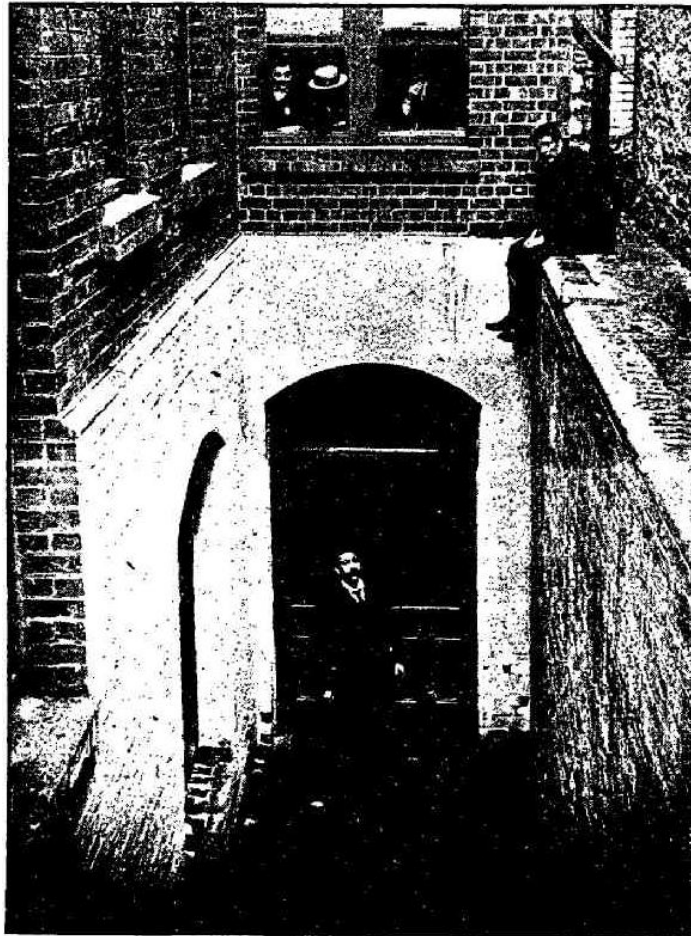
The Grenfell Street Fire.



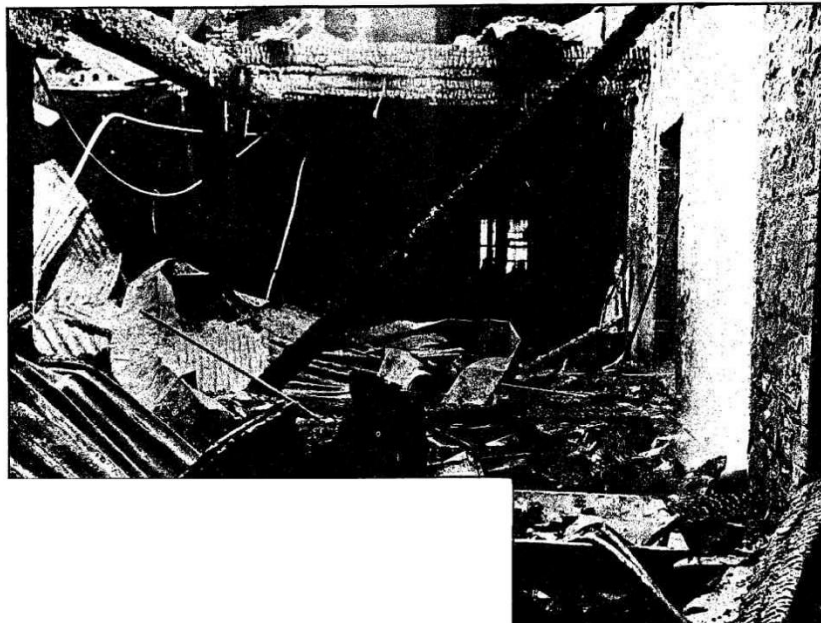
THE FIRE AT ITS HEIGHT



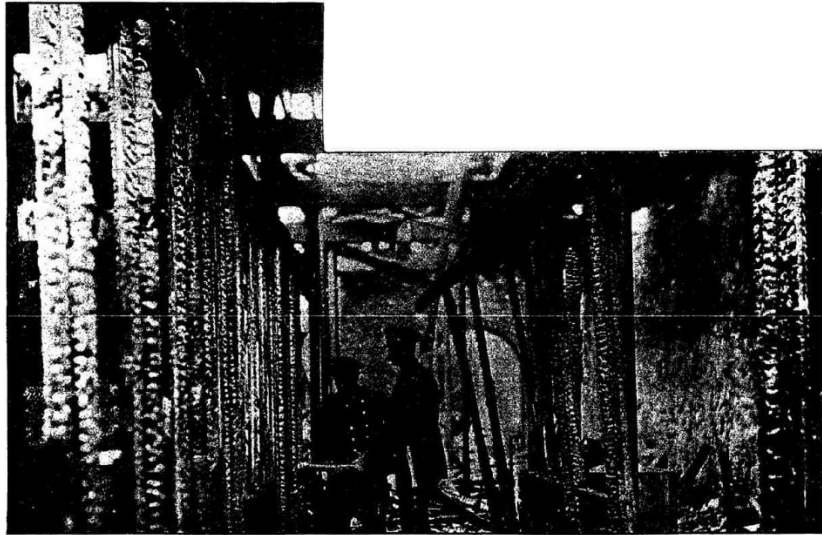
VIEW OF THE RUINS NEAR THE GRENFELL- STREET ENTRANCE.



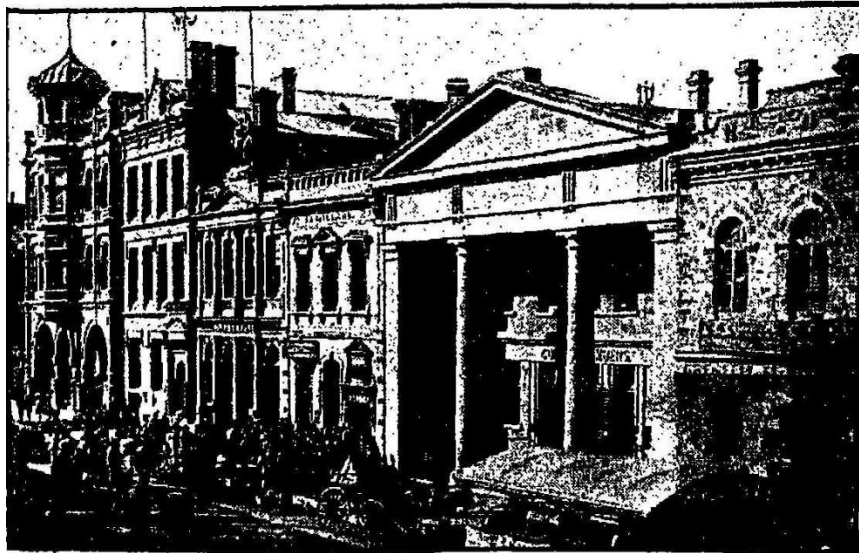
THE LIGHT WELL, INTO WHICH FOREMAN DICKIE AND MR. ROBERTSON FELL.



SCENE LOOKING SOUTH FROM GRENFELL-STREET ENTRANCE.



SCENE IN THE CENTRE OF THE BUILDING.



THE BLOCK OF BUILDINGS ENDANGERED.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 26 July 1902, page 26

MR. GEORGE BOOKER.



MR. GEORGE BOOKER.

Mr. George Booker, who has filled the office of Superintendent of Fire Brigades with conspicuous ability since 1887, has had an eventful career. He was born in Liverpool on October 9, 1854, and was educated with a view to entering the mercantile marine. After passing the necessary examinations he became an officer on one of the Liverpool, Brazil, and River Plate mail-boats. He remained in the service for several years, and his experiences on the eastern coast of South America were often of a romantic character. When he grew tired of a seafaring life Mr. Booker decided to devote his attention to fire brigade work, and joined the Liverpool Brigade. After spending a brief period in the English sea-port he went to America, and obtained employment at Seneca Falls, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. From the latter place he came to Australia and joined the Insurance Fire Brigade in Sydney. On July 29, 1887, he was appointed Superintendent of Fire Brigades in South Australia. At that time the brigade was not nearly so well equipped as it is at present, and when the financial and other drawbacks which he has had to contend against are taken into account, Mr. Booker has good reason to be proud of the efficiency of the small but zealous band of men under his command.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 13 August 1902, page 6

"FIRE, FIRE!"

"Fire, Fire!" yelled a belated playgoer in King William-street on Tuesday evening at 11.15, and a crowd of about a hundred persons soon gathered in front of "The Advertiser" alarm, the glass of which had been broken. The conflagration existed in the vivid imagination of the excited individual only, for the bell had been rung by Superintendent Booker to keep the men of the ever-alert brigade up to the highest state of efficiency. The Metropolitan reels and ladder pulled up at the alarm in one minute 45 seconds, and the North Adelaide reel bowled down King William-street a couple of minutes after the call. "Smart work," observed a bystander; "give them a cheer," and hats were off in a twinkling. A special round of applause was given for the popular superintendent.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Friday 22 August 1902, page 4

SANDOW AT THE FIRE STATION.

Adelaide is reaping the full benefit of having the greatest modern apostle of physical culture in this State for a fortnight. A wave of enthusiasm for muscle has passed over visitors to the Tivoli Theatre. Citizens have been feeling their flabby biceps and deltoids with anything but satisfaction. Dust has been rubbed off neglected dumb-bells and developers, and a hurried ten minutes before breakfast has been given to the service of strenuous Hercules instead of being snoozed away in the society of lazy Morpheus. The mood will pass away, but what a good thing it is for people to become enthusiastic now and again over something so wholesome and safe. A few days ago the police had a grand opportunity of learning how to get the most out of their bodies with the least exertion, and yesterday evening the Fire Brigade had a similar privilege. Five officers and 22 men, captained by Superintendent Booker, mustered in the yard of the station to meet Sandow and receive instruction in his system. The first part of the programme was to be photographed. Then the men got hold of the "grip" dumb-bells and set to work. Instructor Young put them through their paces, in the same businesslike way in which he tackled the police. Before he had finished with them the men had had a real good grilling, and they did not seem at all sorry to get their coats on again. Whilst expressing a favorable opinion of the physique and deportment of the firemen, Sandow inclined to think that they would be much smartened up by a systematic drilling with his dumb-bells and developers.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 8 October 1902, page 4

A FIRE IN THE CITY.

There was considerable commotion in the city on Tuesday evening, when an alarm of fire was raised in Rundle-street at 25 minutes past 8, and a reel, the steam fire-engine, and the escape ladder from the head station were quickly on the scene, while the reels from Norwood, Unley, and North Adelaide, which were also summoned, arrived soon afterwards. The flames were found to be issuing from a goods storage-room at the rear of the premises of Messrs. Charles Everett & Co., grocers. The brigade, under Superintendent Booker, with commendable promptitude, soon got three lines of hose—one from Rundle-street, another from Charles-street, and the third from Grenfell-street to work on the flames which were shooting out of the roof of the store, and 20 minutes later the fire was completely under control. For a time the firemen had a sharp tussle in preventing the flames from reaching the front portion of the shop, and the occupants of the adjoining premises were very anxious until all danger had passed. A considerable amount of damage was done to the stock of groceries by fire and water, but an estimate of the loss cannot be formed until to-day, when the insurances on the property will also be ascertained. Tram and other traffic was interrupted in Rundle-street for some time, and although a large crowd gathered complete order was kept by the police, under the supervision of Inspectors Sullivan and Shaw. The premises were closed at the usual hour last evening, and the cause of the outbreak is at present a mystery. About 12 years ago a fire occurred in almost exactly the same spot.

Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 7 November 1902, page 4

READY FOR FIRE.

At about 10 o'clock on Thursday night persons in the vicinity of Brookman's Building, in Grenfell street, were somewhat surprised by the sudden appearance of the metropolitan fire reel and engine, followed a second or two later by the ladder. The fire fighters had arrived before many people in the street had any idea of their proximity. But fortunately they had not been summoned to a fire—it was a false alarm, the object of the call out being drill practice. In a remarkably short time, considering the oppressive weather, the reels from the sub-urban stations dashed up in fine style, and those on board were greeted by loud cheers. The sonorous voice of Superintendent Booker was at last heard. He re-quested them to "fall in and follow on," and with the Superintendent in a trap leading the way the engines and reels and ladder formed quite a cavalcade wending its way to the head station in Wakefield street. Citizens who witnessed the turn-out were pleased at the splendid appearance of the horses

particularly. The times occupied by the different reels in reaching Brookman's Building from their stations were: — Metropolitan station, 2m. 20s; Unley, 7m.; Norwood, 4m.; North Adelaide, 3m. 30s. After reaching the head station the reels were dismissed.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 8 November 1902, page 8

AN ALARM OF FIRE.

Considerable excitement was caused in the heart of the city on Friday afternoon by the appearance of a fire reel, followed by the puffing steamer and lumbering escape. Galloping down so busy a thorough-fare as King William-street is not unattended with danger, but it is remarkable with what celerity the roadway can be cleared soon after the glistening helmets of the firemen are first discerned in the distance. The call came from near the Beehive Corner, and shortly after the vehicles drew up there a large crowd had collected.

An investigation showed that the cause of the turnout lay in Ellis' Covent Garden.

In effecting some improvements to the shop a gas pipe was perforated, and the escaping gas became ignited. The unexpected illumination was only temporary, for a prompt application to the meter remedied the defect, and the services of the brigade were not required.

Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 15 November 1902, page 30

FIRE IN RUNDLE-STREET

About half past 1 o'clock on Saturday afternoon an alarm of fire was given by an employe of Messrs. Wilson, Bruce, and Co., of Rundle-street. The bells in the fire station commenced ringing at 1.40 p.m., and a few seconds afterwards the reels, steamer, and ladder were proceeding at top speed through the streets. The North Adelaide and Norwood reels made good time from their respective stations, and were at the scene of the conflagration with commendable promptitude. There was no difficulty in locating the fire, which was at Mr. A. J. Selway's furniture establishment. When the first section of the brigade arrived at Mr. Selway's the fire had secured a good hold of the building, the four walls of which enclosed a space of 80 ft. by 24 ft. The interior was a mass of flames, which were burning through the roof, and licking up the woodwork around the windows. The fire was attacked from both back and front, a line of hose being brought from Charles-street, while a second was carried over the outhouses of the Plough and Harrow Hotel. A huge volume of water was poured on the flames from these points. Although the fire had secured a good hold when the firemen arrived, the work of the brigade was so effective that the danger of the blaze spreading was small. After about half an hour's fighting the flames were well under control, and by 20 minutes to 3 a portion of the attacking force was withdrawn. At 3 o'clock the fire was out, and although the occupiers of the buildings in the immediate vicinity spent some anxious moments, the flames did not once get beyond the control of the firemen, and they died away without doing any further damage. The city coroner decided that an inquest was unnecessary.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 22 November 1902, page 22



MADAME MELBA VISITING THE METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE STATION.

Photo. Gabriel, Adelaide