

## Adelaide Fire Brigade 1923

*Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 1 January 1923, page 6*

### OUR FIREFIGHTERS.

Work of the Brigade. A Good Year.

When "fire" is cried, and danger nigh, "God and the fireman" is the people's cry. But when 'tis quenched, and all things righted, God is forgotten, and the fireman slighted.

The Adelaide, suburban and country fire brigades answered 400 calls in 1922. The record is 439. There were no serious fires, and Chief Officer Dickie attributes that in a large measure to early notification of the outbreaks.

The man who wrote the above verse knew what he was talking about. He was Sir Eyre Massey Shaw, one time Chief Officer of the London Fire Brigade, who has aptly been termed "The father of the fire brigades throughout the world." And, as a father knows his children, Sir Eyre Massey Shaw knew his firemen. It is also obvious that he knew the world he lived in. Chief Officer J. E. Dickie, of the Adelaide Fire Brigade, has much in common with the late "father of the fire brigades." He is a veteran in his profession—he will have been 40 years a fireman in June next—the welfare of the men under him is his chief concern; up-to-date efficiency is his uppermost ambition; and an unshakable reticence his outstanding characteristic. All these a representative of *The Register* had revealed when he called upon Mr. Dickie on Saturday evening to have a chat on the work of the brigade during 1922. But for the fact that Mr. Dickie realized he owed something to his men, the pressman would probably have left lamenting.

—No Serious Outbreaks.—

"How many calls have the different brigades answered during the year?" asked the reporter. "A total of 400," answered Mr. Dickie, "That takes in country stations as well as suburban, but does not include volunteer brigades. They do not come under the jurisdiction of the Fire Brigades' Board. So far, that is a decrease of 12 as compared with last year, but, of course, there are 30 hours of this year yet to go, and something may turn up. There also might have been a call or two in the country of which we have not yet been informed. Our record was in 1918-19, when we received 439 calls." Mr. Dickie went on to say that there were no really serious fires during the period in question. That was chiefly due to the fact that the brigade had received early notification of outbreaks, which was more than half the battle from the fire fighters' point of view. The public were evidently becoming educated to the gravity of delaying calling up the brigade. This realization on their part greatly facilitates the work of the firemen. Consequently, during the past 12 month there had been no great loss or damage caused by fires. There had been one death at a conflagration. That was at Narma, Private Hospital, on South terrace, where a nurse succumbed to injuries she had received as the result of the explosion of a kerosine lamp. In a number of instances, members of the brigade had rendered first aid. It was part of a fireman's training, and about 90 per cent of the present force held St. John's ambulance certificates.

— Largest Fires.—

The largest fires during the year, and those which, if they had not been taken in time, might have proved serious, were Hudd's furniture factory, in Halifax street east, where six adjacent houses were affected; Weidenman's furniture store and Bowden's timber yard, at Port Pirie; and Gruneklee's tailoring establishment, in King William street, Adelaide, opposite to the Majestic Theatre. All that goes into the record books, under the heading of "Remarks" in the case of such fires, are terse entries like— "Second and third floor gutted," or "Severe damage to building and contents" —not a word about the work of the brigade in the matter. The firemen carry out their hazardous jobs—at midday or midnight, it is all the same to them—and

they go back to the station to clean the machines and hang up the hoses to dry. Then, perhaps, if they do not get another call on top of that— which is often the case —go off to bed. They take it all as part of the day's work. Those who have seen them fighting desperately at long odds, picturesquely silhouetted against the lurid glare of the flames on top of a tall building, or have seen them carried out unconscious, or gasping for breath, from a smoke-filled interior, have a small idea of the great work which the fireman does, but says so little about.

— Malicious False Alarms.—

Thoughtless persons, who give malicious false alarms, commit a criminal offence, which is rightly punished with the utmost rigour of the law. It is a pity these foolish people do not consider the consequences of their acts. The offenders unfortunately, are generally too youthful to be given their just deserts. During the last 12 months brigades throughout the State have acknowledged no fewer than 100 malicious false alarms. The figures, however, compare favourably with those of Melbourne and Sydney, and particularly the former, where, during the past two years, the number of false alarms has been more than half the total calls received. In 1920-21 the Melbourne Brigade received 1,352 false alarms out of a total of 2,534 calls, and in 1921-22 1,348 out of 2,650 calls, which gives a fair idea of what Melbourne firemen have to put up with.

***Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Friday 12 January 1923, page 2***

FIRE IN BEDROOM.

A fire broke out at Mrs. Sealer's residence, in Hamley street, Adelaide, at about a quarter to 11 last night. A bedroom and the contents thereof were damaged. The cause of the conflagration is unknown. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade was called in and quickly coped with the situation.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 15 January 1923, page 5***

FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT.

"Behind the Times."

A correspondent, who claims to be fully acquainted with the facts to which he refers, writes:— In your account of two recent fires at Port Adelaide, very needful attention is drawn to the obsolete plant with which the Port Adelaide Brigade is equipped, and the serious menace to the very large total of valuable property in the area under the brigade's protection. It is high time that something was done in the matter, and I would like to draw attention also to the lack of equipment in Adelaide. The Adelaide Brigade is one of, if not the most efficient, in the Commonwealth, and what appliances they have, are in the very best of order, but owing to the false ideas of economy of the Government, the equipment is nothing like sufficient for the needs of the city. A comparison with the other principal Australian cities, as regards the most important items discloses startling figures, and makes one wonder whether the vital importance of an adequate fire fighting plant is realized by the authorities here. The following is the position: —

— Motor Fire Engines. —

Sydney and suburbs, 42.

Melbourne, 23.

Brisbane, 3.

Perth, 3.

Broken Hill, 2.

Adelaide and Port Adelaide, 1.

— Motor Extension Ladders. —

Sydney, 3. of 72 ft.

Melbourne, 1 for 72 ft .

Brisbane, 1 of 90 ft .  
Perth, 1 of 72 ft .  
Adelaide, 1 horsedrawn ladder of 60 ft.

The remaining equipment is in somewhat similar proportion. It does not make on any the more comfortable to know also that in the event of a fire breaking out in any building in Adelaide above the fourth floor, the brigade has no equipment to obtain a flow of water to this height, and would simply have to wait for the blaze to come down to it. Adelaide is growing daily in the city block area property of huge and increasing aggregate value is at stake, and I sincerely trust a more commonsense and liberal view of the needs of the brigade will be held by the Government, not after, but before the matter is forced on them by some disastrous conflagration.

***Express (Adelaide, SA : 1922 - 1923), Tuesday 16 January 1923, page 1***

FIRE IN GROTE-STREET.

Prompt Work by Brigade.

A fire occurred on Tuesday morning between 8.30 and 9 o'clock at the works of Messrs. E. T. Fisher & Co., motor cycle importers and electroplaters, Grote-street, and damage to the extent of several hundreds of pounds was done. The fire broke out in the plating department and in a few seconds the centre of the building, which is of brick, and which has a frontage of 40 ft. to Grote-street, was ablaze. About 30 or 40 men were at work at the time, but all managed to escape, though Mr. R. Symon, who was upstairs in the enamelling department at the time, was severely burnt. Mr. Symon at first attributed the smoke to his enamelling stove becoming overheated, but on going to investigate, found that the fire was in the lower part of the building. The staircase was already well alight, and he had to make a rush through the flames before he reached safety. The fire brigade was quickly on the spot, and a marvellous save was effected, in respect to a great portion of the building. The plant, however, was considerably damaged but it will be impossible to compute the amount of the loss sustained for some hours yet.

Messrs. Madge & Sorensen, whose wood and iron motor garage is next door to Messrs. Fisher's premises, had an anxious time getting out their motor cars, and the management of the Empire Theatre, which is situated on the eastern side, may also congratulate themselves on the lucky escape of their premises. Had it not been for the promptitude and efficiency of the brigade, nothing could have saved the adjoining buildings, and in that case the shops on the western side of the Central Market must have been in considerable danger.



*State Library of South Australia - The Empire Theatre, E.T. Fisher & Co., and Madge & Sorenson, Grote Street, Adelaide [B 1296], The Empire Theatre, E.T. Fisher & Co., (Electroplaters, Cycle and Motor Builders) and Madge & Sorenson (Motor Engineers), Grote Street, Adelaide, south side on the 28th March 1923. Parked in front is a Ford, registration 11157, owned by Daphne Walsh, and a Pullman. For a view of the premises of E.T. Fisher and Co. and Madge & Sorensen after alteration in 1924, see B 2288. For exact site see B 9616. 1923, Photographer, State Library of South Australia.*

**Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1923), Tuesday 16 January 1923, page 1**

#### SPILLED PETROL

#### FIRE IN GROTE STREET

#### A Remarkable Save

That the utmost precaution should be exercised when dealing with such a highly inflammable liquid as petrol was demonstrated by a fire which broke out on Tuesday morning in the premises occupied by Messrs. E. T. Fisher & Co., in Grote street, Adelaide. The two-story building, which was in use as an electro-plating and cycle works, was composed chiefly of bricks, woodwork, and asbestos sheeting. The blaze broke out about 8.45 a.m., when Mr. John L. Koch (owner of the premises and manager of the business), and most of the employes were about to settle down to the day's work. One of the men accidentally upset a container of petrol near to the front entrance of the building, and the liquid immediately ran down the sloping floor towards the rear of the shop. When half-way on its journey thence the fumes that arose got in contact with a lighted gas jet, and instantly the long stream of petrol was alight. The few men who were employed on the ground floor set to at once and did all that they could to check the flames from spreading, but the water which they poured on them only made matters worse, and within a few minutes the woodwork was blazing furiously. Spreading rapidly along the rafters, the flames eventually got a grip on the huge electric switchboard that was a vital factor in the working of the establishment.

—Brigade's Splendid Work.—

It was at that stage that the members of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade arrived on the scene. Attacking the flames from the rear, the men effected a remarkable save. Had it not been for the smartness with which they turned out, and the efficiency with which they did their work, it is certain that the building would have been entirely demolished, as well as probably the

premises on the western side (Madge & Sorrenson's Garage), in which there was stored a quantity of petrol. The Empire Theatre is located on the eastern side, but as it is constructed almost wholly of brick it would not, probably, have suffered to any great extent. It was not long before the brigade had the fire under control. About £300 worth of damage was done. The contents of the building were insured with the Colonial and Mutual Insurance Company, and the building with the Norwich Union Insurance Office.

—A Narrow Escape.—

The top floor was divided into two compartments, both of which had exit stairs, which led into the body of the main floor. The rear compartment had in addition a door opening on to the backyard. Through the latter the men were able to escape, although it necessitated a drop of about 15 ft. The one man employed in the upstairs front portion of the building was less fortunate. His only means of egress was down a stairway. The conflagration had been raging for some time before he was made aware of the fact, and he had to effect his escape through the flames. He was so badly scorched that he had to be conveyed immediately to his home. About two hours after the Brigade had left a representative of The Register Office was walking over the scene of the blaze with Mr. Koch, and in one of the rooms upstairs they heard a faint crackling noise. Looking towards the ceiling, they saw a small flame creeping gradually along one of the rafters. It was easily extinguished.



B 9616

*State Library of South Australia - Grote Street [B 9616], Grote Street, south side, 1927, the right side of building in the centre is 57.5 yards east of Moonta Street, frontage of British Motors and E.T. Fisher & Co premises is 24 yards. For view of the premises before alterations see B 1796. 1927, Photographer, F. A Potts, Part of Acre 332 Collection.*



B 38794

*State Library of South Australia - Duncan & Fraser Factory [B 38794], Duncan & Fraser Factory. General service wagons built for the A.I.F. in Franklin Street, north side. Approximately 1915. Part of Acre 240 Collection*

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 19 January 1923, page 6**

#### NEWS OF THE DAY.

#### FIRE BRIGADE APPLIANCES.

An article in The Register on Tuesday concerning the lack of up-to-date fire fighting appliances possessed by the S.A. Fire Brigades Board has created much comment in the city. The Chief Secretary (Hon. J. G. Bice) when invited by a representative of The Register to comment on the position, did not deny any of the statements made in the article, but referred the reporter to the Chairman of the Board (Mr. E. Frinsdorf). The latter maintained a policy of silence on the subject. The provisions of the Act appears to make it clear that the board is the responsible body. The Chief Officer of the Adelaide Fire Brigade station is a member of the board, and knowing the position as he does, has doubtless recommended improvements to the board. It is believed that a majority of the board have for some time been in agreement that improvements should be carried into effect, but that when their recommendations in this direction have been forwarded to the Government, they have been turned down.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 19 January 1923, page 6**

#### FIRE AT WEST TERRACE.

An alarm call was received by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade at 10.46 on Thursday night, to a small dwelling, occupied by Mrs. S. Lawson, at 170 West terrace, city, where a fire had broken out among some stored furniture. The flames were quickly subdued, but the room and its contents were considerably damaged. The cause of the blaze is unknown.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Tuesday 23 January 1923, page 9**

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS.

FIRE IN PIRIE-STREET.

The fire brigade received a call to the premises of Messrs. Charles Holmes and Sons, bedstead manufacturers, in Pirie-street, at 9.20 p.m. on Monday. Little damage was done.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 24 January 1923, page 11***

FIRE IN BOTANIC PARK.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call at 8.40 p.m. on Tuesday to the Botanic Park, where a big grass fire had broken out.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 24 January 1923, page 6***

FIRE IN BOTANIC PARK.

A couple of hedges and a considerable area of grass caught on fire at the Botanic Park on Tuesday evening. An appliance from the City Brigade was quickly on the scene, and streams of water from the firemen's hoses extinguished the outbreak in about half an hour.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 24 January 1923, page 6***

CASUALTIES.

A SUBURBAN FIRE.

The business premises of Mr. Ewald Hebert Lutz, plumber, which, adjoined his house at 40 Hardy street Goodwood, were completely destroyed by fire shortly after 2 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. The shop was constructed of wood and iron, and in a shed there was a Studebaker motor car. The latter was valued at £250, and was insured for £175. It was also destroyed. The shed and contents were valued at £330, but were not insured. It is thought that the fire was started by the forge, which Mr Lutz had left burning while absent on business. The Metropolitan and Unley Fire Brigades were soon in attendance, but on arrival found that the flames, fanned by a strong north-westerly wind, and assisted by the petrol in the motor car, had made such headway that it was impossible to save anything. The flames spread to the roof of an outhouse connected with the premises next door, but the firemen prevented any material damage being done in that direction.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Tuesday 30 January 1923, page 10***

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS.

SMALL FIRE IN A SHOP.

The Adelaide Fire Brigade received a call from the Supreme Court alarm at 5.21 p.m. on Monday to a small fire at Mr. A. S. Window's auction mart. King William-street south. It was extinguished promptly. The auction room and front entrance being slightly damaged.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 30 January 1923, page 6***

FIRE AT AUCTION MART.

Considerable damage to the ground floor of the premises of Messrs. A. S. Window & Co., agents and auctioneers, 301 King William street South, was caused by a fire which broke out about 5.30 on Monday evening. Constable C. C. Moody noticed smoke issuing from the premises, and notified the fire brigade. The firemen arrived within four minutes, and the flames were extinguished before they could spread to the upper story. The ground floor, which contained furniture and other goods, was almost completely destroyed by the combined effects of the fire and water.

***Express (Adelaide, SA : 1922 - 1923), Friday 2 February 1923, page 4***

## DESTRUCTIVE BLAZE IN PAYNEHAM

### Garage and Cycle Factory.

#### Swept by Flames

Serious damage was done by a fire which raged in the early hours of Friday morning at Mr. L. A. Elliott's Garage and Cycle Factory, a substantial brick and iron building on the main road at Payneham, nearly opposite the district council chambers. Nobody was on the premises when the outbreak was discovered. Adjacent to the garage and workrooms is Mr. J. W. Ware's bakery, and Mr. and Mrs. Ware were sleeping in a house at the rear of their shop on Payneham-road. About 1.30 a.m. the latter was awakened by a banging noise, and presently noticed an intense glare and heard the hissing of flames. Mr. Ware hurriedly put on boots and a coat and ran out to notify the brigade. The alarm was received by Station-Officer Bland, of Norwood, from the corner of Wellington and Payneham roads at 1.46 a.m., and he promptly turned out with the motor appliance. By the time Mr. Ware had returned to the scene the fire, which he had at first noticed in the roof of the garage near where it adjoined Mr. Elliott's showroom, had extended to the back of the factory, a distance of about 150 ft. from the street.

Constable Pawling of Payneham, was called out at 1.50, and the Norwood brigade passed him as he was running towards the fire. The place was alight from the middle to the bottom end when he reached the scene the flames were showing up at a considerable height about the roof. The fire brigade headquarters in Wakefield-street were informed of the destructive nature of the outbreak. Other properties in the vicinity were in imminent danger, and two appliances were sent out from the city to assist in coping with the flames.

A sensational incident was an explosion of a full petrol tank in one of two large motor lorries stored in the garage. There was an alarming concussion, which caused windows and doors to rattle in houses nearly half a mile away. Simultaneously a section of the roof was shot skyward on a column of fire, and collapsed with a loud crash, which scattered sparks and blazing debris in all directions. There were several other minor explosions of petrol. The firemen broke into the premiss and tackled the task of saving the showroom abutting on Payneham-road.

It appeared likely that Mr. Ware's bake-house and storeroom would be involved in the blaze, but the brigade, after a hard battle, prevented a spread in that direction. Mr. Ware extricated a 1-ton lorry from his shed, as destruction threatened it, but a baker's cart was left standing about 30 ft. from the burning garage, and the heat caused the paint on it to blister.

The brigade by copious application of water from the hoses prevented the fire from spreading to the showroom, and the damage there was principally due to the discoloration effected by smoke. There were 16 motor cycles and about 20 push bicycles in the showroom, besides a large quantity of tyres, motor oils, and accessories.

Mr. L. A. Elliott (the proprietor) resides at Wellington-road, Evandale, and was advised of the occurrence by a messenger about 3.30 a.m. By the time he got to the garage, between 3.30 and 4 a.m., the fire was out and the brigade men were preparing to depart. He had not the remotest idea as to the cause of the outbreak, and said everything was in order when he left the premises shortly after 6 o'clock on Thursday evening. Inside the factory he could find nothing to indicate where or how it started, but Mr. Ware was positive that the seat of the fire in the early stages appeared to be in the roof at about half distance from the street to the rear.

The large workroom presented a sorry spectacle on Friday morning, as the destruction wrought in it had been complete. Two motor lorries, a motor car, and a large number of motor cycles had been reduced to a tangled mass of buckled and scorched iron and steel, among which sheets of crumpled roofing iron were scattered about in great confusion. The tyres of the ruined vehicles had been practically reduced to carbon.

One of the ruined motor lorries, a 32 h.p. Commer, with a torpedo charabanc body, was the property of Mr. V. J. Walsh, of Payneham, and has been his stock-in-trade for a furniture-removing and passenger-carrying business. It had been stored by him in the garage. The other lorry, a 22-h.p. Commer, belonged to Mr. Elliott. That of Mr. Walsh was insured for £100, but was valued by him at between £600 and £700. It had a passenger body built of seasoned ash. Mr. Elliotts lorry was worth between £400 and £500. A 22-h.p. Maxwell single-seater motor car, with a carrying tray, the property of Mr. Elliott, was also completely destroyed. It was not a new car, but was in first-class order, having just been overhauled.

In the wreckage of the factory it was impossible to determine the exact number of motor cycles destroyed, but there appeared to be about 20. The loss includes a dozen or so absolutely new machines, valued at £70 to £90 each. These had been built and enamelled on the premises, and were all ready for sending out. Among the other motor cycles destroyed was that on which Mr. A. J. B. Clark won the One-mile Knock Solo Handicap in the Motor Cycle Club speed trials at Sellick's Beach on Saturday last, and which he was riding when he crashed into a picket fence during a race at Thebarton Oval on Wednesday. The charred and distorted mass in the burnt-out workroom included a large number of wheels and other parts used in motor cycling and bicycle construction

Mr. Elliott stated that the fire would not prevent him from carrying on business, as the showroom was intact, and his lathes appeared to be undamaged. It was his intention to make a fresh start at the earliest possible moment. There was an insurance policy on the premises with the Employers' Liability Assurance Corporation. The adjusters were at work on Friday, but it was stated to be impossible without a thorough investigation in detail to estimate even approximately the extent of the damage, which must amount to some thousands of pounds.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 3 February 1923, page 14**

GENERAL NEWS.

MORE FALSE ALARMS.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade in the early hours of Friday morning answered what proved to be a fake alarm call to Gray street, Adelaide. Toward midnight — at 11.24 p.m., to be precise— the Unley Brigade had a similar experience, having to respond to a malicious call to the corner of the South road and Addison road, which is a long distance from the Unley fire Station.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 10 February 1923, page 2**

OLD BARNEY A WONDERFUL HORSE.

PRIDE OF THE BRIGADE.

A magnificent old steed, full of strength and vigour, is Barney, of the Adelaide Fire Brigade. He will be 39 next August. The members of the brigade call him the "wonderful old horse." Life of man and animals is generally ticked off in some given span. Now and then, by reason of some unknown circumstance it is exceeded, and then the world sits up and takes notice. Old men when asked to explain the reason of their unusually long period in this world often attribute it to non-smoking or non-drinking or perhaps to hard work. It is all a matter of opinion. But Barney doesn't put it down to anything. That is because he has not the power of speech, being only a horse, but he thoroughly enjoys every day of his life. Barney is one of the four horses the Adelaide Fire Brigade possesses nowadays, and he has seen a particularly long span of life for a horse. Next August he will be 39, although few looking at him would realise more than 15 years had passed him by.

A WILLING WORKER.

The magnificent old animal is a dark dapple bay with one white leg. The passing of the years has not taken away any of his youthful dash and spirit, for he is as strong and willing as ever.

Each day he drags the brigade's extension ladder out at practice. Originally Barney was a coach horse. He was one of many that belonged to the old coaches of Messrs. John Hill and Co., and many a trip Barney has done on the Clare to Auburn Road. Then he took a new position on the Noarlunga route, and later came back to Adelaide to drag a doctor's brougham. From there he descended to be a market gardener's horse, and this is where the Fire Brigade stepped in and secured him. It was about this time, too, that Barney at the age of 22 managed to win a prize in the Exhibition.

#### PRIDE OF THE BRIGADE.

Since then Barney has been well looked after by Mr. R. Morris, who is in charge of the horses at Wakefield Street. Mr. Morris is exceptionally proud of the noble steed, too, as all the members of the brigade are. "He is a bonzer worker," Mr. Morris declared enthusiastically when the "Mail" man paid a visit to Barney's quarters this week. "He is one of the best and one of the most affectionate horses I have ever seen. I went away for a short while and he hunted everywhere for me, so they tell me. He wandered all over the place, and finished up by polishing off some of the flowers." Outside of the Brigade Barney has many friends. At the market everyone knows him and he is always welcomed. If he is anywhere about his admirers stroll up to greet the old horse and see how he is getting on.

#### TREATS FOR BARNEY.

Barney is in wonderful condition. A big horse with an immense chest, his coat shines with a beautiful gloss. Despite his years he still has splendid teeth, and he is sound all over. "He has been a wonderful old horse," said Mr. Morris. "Of course, we treat him well nowadays, and he is not knocked about at all. This is how we treat him," added Mr. Morris, holding a piece of lolly in his hand. Barney relished it, too. His soft white nose nuzzled around for more, but it was not forthcoming. In the little paddock adjoining, however, Barney knew where there was some-thing else to be gained. The woman in the house next door is one of Barney's many admirers. He strolled over to the fence and hung his wise old head over, waiting for the piece of bread that rarely fails to come.

#### ENJOYING EVERY DAY.

So it is that Barney is enjoying his wonderful life to the fullest. Although his 39 years must have a deteriorating effect on the strength and vim that were his in the days gone by he does not show it. He is content to just live on, loving and loved. What a tale he could tell if he could only speak! "If he lives until next September," said Mr. Morris, in departing, "I am going to show him, not for competition, but just as a wonderful old horse." There seems no doubt, either, that Barney will see that great day.



GROWN OLD IN SERVICE. Mr. R. Morris and "Barney," the fire brigade horse that draws the ladder. Both have served many years, and "Barney" will be 39 next August. (Letterpress Page 2.)

***Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1923), Thursday 15 February 1923, page 1***

#### WUNDERLICH'S FIRE.

##### Outbreak in "Teasing Room"

At 9.35 this morning the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to attend a fire at the premises of Wunderlich, Limited, in Currie street. When the engines arrived it was found that a part of the rear portion of the building, known as the "teasing room," was alight. The cause of the outbreak is uncertain, but it is thought that an electric motor ignited a bale of fibre, and that this caught other bales which were piled in a corner. All the inflammable material was removed from the vicinity, and the efforts of the firemen resulted in the flames being confined to a small area. The smouldering fibre was difficult to extinguish, and the brigade worked hard for an hour before all the sparks were extinguished. The damage to stock is estimated at about £500.

***Express (Adelaide, SA : 1922 - 1923), Thursday 15 February 1923, page 2***

#### FIRE IN CURRIE-STREET.

##### Damage to Wunderlich Fibre.

An engine working near the "teasing" room at the Wunderlich ceiling factory, Currie-street, backfired on Thursday morning and a spark started a fire which was estimated to have caused damage to the extent of between £300 and £400. Several large bales of fibre which were stacked near the teasing room were first attacked, but owing to the closeness of the packing the fibre did not make much headway. The brigade was called at 9.40 a.m., and was quickly on the spot. One length of hose was run out and quickly subdued the outbreak. The place where the bales, all of which were severely damaged, is stored, is surrounded with wooden fixtures and stocks of fibrous plaster, and had the flames secured a hold enormous damage would have been done in a few minutes. The damaged material was insured.

Wednesday 21 February 1923 - Fire at Duncan & Fraser Ltd, Franklin Street, Adelaide.



B 38793

*State Library of South Australia - Duncan & Fraser Factory. Franklin Street [B 38793], Duncan & Fraser Factory, Franklin Street, north side. Approximately 1922. Part of Acre 240 Collection.*



The first intimation that anything was wrong was a muffled explosion shortly after the time mentioned, and almost immediately a thin tongue of flame was seen issuing from the centre of Duncan and Fraser's vast building like a pennant. Within a few moments this had spread into a great expanse of flame, and smoke was ascending like a huge black plume. The fire spread rapidly once it had attained a hold, and the greedy flames licked ravenously at the huge petrol tanks. Two shattering explosions which were heard as far afield as Henley Beach and Burnside denoted that these had burst and thereafter there was not a vestige of hope for the doomed building or the greater part of its contents. The breaking of the various windows provided plenty of draught and the flames were soon roaring and leaping in a very inferno of raging heat.

#### A Constable Sees the Flames.

The fire was first noticed by Constable Thorsen, who gave the alarm, and the Fire Brigade arrived on the scene shortly before 6 a.m., but it was obvious even then that it would be hopeless to attempt to save the building.

#### The Roof Falls In.

The firemen immediately forced an entrance and endeavored to get the motor cars out on the road. They were successful in six new Studebaker and a number of Ford cars, but when the petrol tanks exploded the main roof of the building fell in and it was impossible to do anything more in the way of salvage. Thereafter the firemen devoted their efforts to saving buildings in the vicinity and in this they were helped by the fact that there was little wind blowing. What breeze there was blew in the direction of the fire-proof building of the Farmers' Union, who have to thank their automatic sprinklers for the fact that their Franklin-street frontage shows little or no damage. Their hardware and machinery sections, however, suffered severely and at one time it looked as if the fire would obtain a hold on the main building itself.

#### A Crowd Quickly Gathers.

Despite the early hour a crowd soon gathered but the presence of troopers and foot police who were quickly on the scene kept them from crowding and hampering the difficult and dangerous work of the firemen. The fire presented a magnificent spectacle, as the flames broke through the roof and windows of the second storey.

The smell of the burning paint and varnish was overpowering, as scores of fine cars were devoured, and there was an ever recurring series of explosions as the flames reached the petrol tanks of the various cars. The big petrol tanks had exploded before the crowd reached the spot, but the knowledge that there must of necessity be a big quantity of petrol on the premises inspired them with a healthy regard for their safety, which made the work of the police much easier.

#### Oblivious of Danger.

The firemen, under Deputy Superintendent Cooper, seemed utterly oblivious of danger, and scores of helmeted figures could be seen in the blazing building clambering about, and gesticulating the orders which could not be heard for the tremendous roar and crackle of the fire. The whole scene was a veritable devil's barbecue, with property worth fully £140,000 as the feast. In this connection it may be mentioned that 13 new Studebaker cars, which were only delivered to the firm on Tuesday, and 44 Ford cars, which were awaiting delivery, were devoured in a few moments by the flames. There was great danger for the fire fighters. and one fireman is reported to have had his leg badly burned.

#### A Narrow Escape.

"The Advertiser" photographer was one of the first on the scene, and he had a narrow escape from death. With Deputy Superintendent Cooper, two firemen, and his assistant, he was standing on a portion of the roof at the back of the building, intent upon securing a photograph of the spectacle at close quarters when the roof gave way, and those standing upon it were

precipitated almost into the flames, or so it appeared to the horror-struck onlookers. There was a rush for the spot, and it was found that all five had escaped almost by a miracle, having been flung on a ledge a few feet away from the flames. The heat was terrific, and buildings in the vicinity were badly damaged by heat and smoke.

Hours afterwards, when the whole place presented an air of desolation, looking strangely incongruous in the heart of the city, a motor car was seen to be still burning with shattered headlights, which seemed to glare across the blackened ruins of the great works with concentrated fierceness at the eager, jostling crowd out-side. A thin blue smoke was rising from a score of heaps of twisted iron and steel. Here and there a nicked bar flashed the light back in the watchers' faces. There would be a jet of thick white steam as the firemen turned their hoses on some smouldering embers, but their work was done, the surrounding buildings had been saved, and the danger of a fire that might have swept westward for a full block, had been averted.

#### SCENE OF THE FIRE



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE PREMISES AFTER THE FLAMES HAD BEEN SUBDUED  
THE BRIGADE AT WORK.

Valient Firemen Subdue Flames.

Handicapped by Poor Water Pressure

Five minutes after the fire was first noticed several sections of the brigade were on the spot, and long lengths of hose were rapidly uncurled and fixed to the hydrants. Several jets of water were immediately directed to the root of the flames. Such a hold had the blaze secured on the fragile building that they were clearly visible from the brigade station at Wakefield-street. Huge tongues of flame were seen to be shooting skywards, throwing a lurid glare over the peaceful early morning scene. A number of residences surround the spot, and the occupiers of these were awakened by a sound like a huge clap of thunder. It was evidently the falling upper floors and roof of Messrs. Duncan & Frasers building. The sight that met the eyes as upper storey windows went up and sleepy heads popped out was one of the most terribly brilliant that has been seen in the city for years. The heat engendered by the roaring flames, which quickly licked through the combustible floors and walls of Messrs. Duncan Fraser's building was terrific, and rendered the work of the firemen particularly dangerous. When the

first alarm was received Superintendent Dickie, at the head office, took in the situation at a glance and ordered out all appliances and all out-stations. The first two motors from Wakefield-street were on the scene in a few moments, and the others followed immediately, while the reel from Norwood, Unley, North Adelaide, and Thebarton were also engaged in the rigorous work of fighting the flames within a few minutes. With huge tongues of flames licking all round the building and eating their way rapidly through two of the buildings of the Farmers' Union in Bentham-street, the firemen had a particularly arduous task. All the available hydrants, about ten in number, were requisitioned, and streams of water were being poured into the buildings from all sides. All the water available, however, could not stop the mad rush of the flames through the buildings, which provided easy fuel to their rapaciousness, and the remarkable thing is that the firemen, through a judicious application of the hoses, under the direction of Superintendent Dickie, were able to prevent the fire from spreading further afield. Again, however, better work might have been done had the water pressure been adequate. As it was difficulty was experienced in some cases in getting the jets to reach parts of the building. Firemen heroically clambered through the burning structure wherever they could obtain even a precarious foothold, the better to attack the fire at its base, and placed themselves in imminent danger from falling burning debris. So venturesome were they in some cases that the superintendent had to recall them rightly maintaining that human life was more valuable than property. Still the work of fire-fighting went on rapidly and efficiently. To such good purpose did the firemen work that by the time people began to arrive in the city for business the flames had been subdued and the buildings were a mass of smoking and dripping ruins.

The automatic sprinklers in the new building of the Farmers' Union undoubtedly saved the situation there, but they had a deteriorating effect upon the work of the brigade in the other buildings as the amount of water they consumed reduced the pressure in the hydrants. The brigade's motor pump was kept at work boosting the pressure as much as possible, but it was noticeable that when the fire had been subdued and most of the brigade had departed that the jet which was kept playing among the smoking ruins would barely reach to the top of the Farmers' Union three-storey machinery building in Bentham-street. Hardly any material can withstand such a blaze as this, and it was stated that even the fire-proof doors were twisted into unrecognisable shapes by the terrific heat. It was stated by eye-witnesses that the blaze equalled that of Burford's soap factory, which, with vast stores of inflammable material, was burnt out in the western end of the city on February 2, 1919, although in the present case the monetary loss is expected to be much greater.

#### AN OLD AND PROGRESSIVE FIRM.

##### Adelaide's Biggest Motor Works.

##### Arranging to Carry On

The firm of Duncan & Fraser is one of the oldest and most progressive in Adelaide. It was established in 1856, within 30 years of the proclamation of the Province, by Mr. James Duncan, and Mr. James Fraser, both of whom are now dead, as a coachbuilding business, and soon attained a high place in the industrial life of the city. With the advent of the motor car the business, under the control of the enterprising sons of Mr. James Duncan, moved onward at ever increasing pace, and now the name of the firm of Duncan & Fraser is one of the best known in the Commonwealth. In the last twelve months alone its business has doubled itself. The destruction of the modern and thoroughly efficient plant is

Mr. Duncan.

a severe loss to the State. There are two companies—Duncan & Fraser, Ltd., and Duncan Motors, Ltd.—under the control of some of the most courageous and enterprising men South Australia has produced. The directorate comprises:—Messrs. J. M. Duncan (chairman), Robert Duncan, A. W. Duncan, and R. A. Duncan (managing directors), and Andrew D. Young. It was pitiful to see these fine men gazing sadly upon the ruins of the magnificent

establishment, which they had built up, and it was inspiring to notice the manner in which they took the blow. In a business like this continuity of operations is essential to prosperity. Even temporary suspension of activities might be fatal to a firm which holds agencies for motor cars that are much in demand, but it was wonderful to watch the demeanor of these men as they stood before the smoking pile and spoke confidently of the ability to defy the evil fate which seems to beset them, and carry on, without noticeable interruption, the huge business which they control. A new and probably still better business will, Phoenix-like, rise from the ashes. Such men are masters of their fate. "Under the bludgeonings of chance" their heads are still unbowed.

STAFF OF 300 TO 400 MEN. TO BE HELD TOGETHER.

AT WORK AGAIN NEXT MONDAY.

Mr. A. W. Duncan was entrusted by his co-directors with the responsibility of supplying information to the press. The board of directors held a meeting in temporary offices in Darling Building, before the flames which consumed their premises were extinguished, to devise means of holding their large staff of employes together, and of keeping faith with the public. Mr. A. W. Duncan said there were between 300 and 400 men on the payroll, and the wages sheet for this part of the great works was about £2,000 weekly. Asked whether these men would be thrown out of employment, Mr. Duncan said he hoped they would not. "We expect to get going again straight away. We have 80 chasses on a steamer—I believe it is the Canadian Cruiser—in Melbourne, and luckily some of our bodies have not been burnt. We also have a number of chasses on our North Adelaide premises, and we do not expect there will be any severe hold-up. Our competitors have come along in a splendid spirit, and offered to help us out. Although we are competitors there is a fraternity in the trade which is now showing a most admirable spirit. Every few minutes someone comes to up with an offer of help." This is magnificent, and another tribute to the high standard of commercial and industrial life in Adelaide.

Mr. Duncan said "Duncan & Fraser's was the largest motor works in Adelaide. They were erecting large premises at Mile-End on land which the firm had recently purchased. The buildings were not yet completed, but he supposed men would now be kept continuously at work upon them. They should have been ready this month, but the progress was a bit behind time. When can you get your staff back at work? he was asked. "What is to-day?" he enquired. "Wednesday. Well we should have all our men at work again by Monday. The Mile-End works will not be ready then, but they will help to accommodate some of our staff."

What about machinery? Do you hope to save any from the wreck? "I cannot say," said Mr. Duncan, gazing wistfully upon the smoking piles of inextricably mixed girders, roof iron, machinery, motor chasses, and other blackened steel and iron work." "But we can get the machinery; we have many friends.

(Continued Page 4.)

GREAT FIRE IN ADELAIDE. (Continued from Page 1.)

A Clean Sweep,

Only Waymouth-street Front Saved.

Mr. Duncan said on the Franklin-street front were the Showrooms and offices of Duncan & Fraser, Ltd., next to the Farmers' Union building, and the offices and garage of Duncan Motors Ltd. adjoined on the western side and completed the frontage. Behind the offices of Duncan and Fraser were workshops of various kinds, and the premises, nearly all of two-storeys, ran through to Waymouth-street, but not in a direct line. There was 140 ft. of frontage to Franklin-street, a depth of 400 ft., and a frontage of 100 ft. to Waymouth-street. In the centre part the works were very much wider than the street frontages. He could not make any

estimate of the ground covered. The fire appeared to have gone right through and completely destroyed the premises, except the workshops facing Waymouth-street.

#### Origin of Fire a Mystery.

He had no idea of how or where the fire started. He did not even know whether it began on his firm's premises. He had not received any report concerning where it was first seen. There was a watchman on the premises, and he had stated that when he first saw the flames they had a good hold. He rushed to the telephone to call the brigade, but the wires apparently were already burnt through, and he could get no answer to his call for "Central." He then rushed out to the fire alarm, but before he reached it he saw the brigade coming along the street.

Questioned as to the fire-fighting appliances on the premises, Mr. Duncan said the sprinkler system was not in use, but there were between 60 and 100 chemical fire extinguishers in the works, and fire hoses also were installed. He could make no estimate of the number of motor cars on the premises. There were some undergoing repairs, and probably some in the garage. The firm recently had a big shipment of Studebaker chassis landed, and perhaps a couple of dozen of them might have been delivered into the destroyed premises. A good number of cars were in the Waymouth-street premises, and were saved.

#### The Amount of Damage Uncertain.

Questioned as to his estimate of the damage Mr. Duncan said he could form no conception. Neither did he know the amount of insurance on the premises. Were you adequately covered? asked the pressman. "We hope so," he replied, "but I can not say." The firemen and others were at the time, endeavoring to open the strong room, but the door had been expanded by heat and would not move.

"No Explosion," Says Mr. Duncan.

#### Phenomenal Progress of Flames

"Some of us were here shortly after six o'clock," Mr. Duncan went on. "I was called up about 6 a.m. by our superintendent and reached here a few minutes later. The whole place even then seemed to be alight." Were you here when the explosion occurred? "There was no explosion on our premises," Mr. Duncan said definitely. You have a petrol tank, have you not? "Yes, but it is some distance underground, and covered by several feet of earth." Mr. Duncan took the reporter to the front of Duncan Motors, Ltd., and pointed out the locality of the tank. "The petrol is still there and quite safe," he said. "I heard no explosion."

The ground floor was of asphalt, he said, and the first floor of wood. There was no big stock of timber kept on the premises. The firm had big premises at North Adelaide, where we stocked our timber, accessories, unassembled chassis, motor cars, and all parts. The building, No. 50, Franklin-street, also was used as a store.

#### LOSS OF FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE UNION.

Although it was not possible to secure a definite statement as to the loss occasioned to the Farmers' Co-operative Union by fire and water, it is probably between £30,000 and £40,000. The headquarters of the Farmers' Union are situated in Franklin-street, with a frontage of 61 ft. to that thoroughfare, and extend back on the rectangular block immediately to the east of Messrs. Duncan & Frazer's, along Bentham-street, to the rear of the Thistle Hotel, situated at the corner of Waymouth and Bentham streets. The company has been located in the Franklin-street premises for the past 23 years, and during that time have gradually enlarged the premises until it had a fine block of brick buildings, which had cost something like £50,000 to erect. These were all fitted in an up-to-date manner, and the merchandise departments were fully stocked with hardware, furniture, and agricultural machinery. The Franklin-street corner block is three-storied high, and that is connected by doorways with the new five storied block which the company first occupied about two years ago. Next to that building, on the

north, was a two-storied detached structure, with only a galvanized iron wall on the west, where the fire at Messrs. Duncan & Fraser's burned fiercely. In that building was stacked hardware, including all descriptions of tools and kitchen requirements. Next to it, and also detached, stood a three-storied building, with heavy agricultural machinery, such as seed drills, binders, ploughs, scarifiers, and engines, on show on the first and second floors, with offices on the top floor. It was the last mentioned two buildings and their contents which suffered most. The two-storied building offered little resistance to the flames from the inferno on the south, and it was completely gutted, the heavy iron girders which supported the first floor, being twisted out of shape by the intense heat. All that was left of that structure were the brick wall and the verandah on the Bentham-street frontage. The three-storied machinery brick building to the north did not catch alight until some time later, and although the floors gave way and everything fell on to the ground floor in a burned and charred condition, the walls were left standing. Among the charred debris could be seen a partly-burned Maxwell motor car, which had been used by one of the travellers, and had been stored at the main delivery entrance for the night.

#### Saved by Water Sprinklers.

A representative of "The Advertiser" was accompanied over the buildings by Mr. J. W. Shannon (chairman of the directors of the Farmers' Union), who expressed the opinion that it was chiefly due to the foresight of the directors in having Grivell water sprinklers installed about 12 months ago, that the new five-storied building was saved from destruction. In addition to the automatic sprinklers suspended from the roofs off each floor, "water curtains" were provided over the windows in the light well and the southern wall, overlooking the motor establishment. As the flames rose from Messrs. Duncan and Fraser's and licked through the windows higher up, the automatic release of the water was most effective, and it was only on the north-western corners of the third and fourth floors that the flames were able to get a hold of the contents of the building. On the third floor is stocked furniture, portion of which was destroyed, and the floor above is used as an office where wheat and insurance business was handled. Mr. Shannon said he was afraid some of the books dealing with those branches of the company's extensive operations had been destroyed. Little damage was done by fire to the building itself, but Mr. Shannon is satisfied, that had the water sprinklers not operated the firemen would have had little chance of saving the main building, the loss of which would have involved the concern in the loss of many thousands of pounds. A tour of the building, however, showed that considerable damage had been done by water throughout the extensive offices. Water was lying on the floors and books everywhere were saturated. "This is the first fire we have ever had," said Mr. Shannon, "and although it might have been worse, we do not want another. Our business will be inconvenienced, but as we have bulk stores at Port Adelaide, farmers will not be seriously hampered in obtaining their requirements.

In recent years the ramifications of the Farmers' Union have been widely extended. and it has its own insurance office, the Co-operative Insurance Company (C.I.F.), in which all insurances on the buildings and contents were effected. These insurances, so far as the headquarters of the Farmers' Union are concerned, amounted to £82.250.

#### Early on the Scene.

Mr. T. E. Yelland (secretary of the Farmers' Union) reached the scene of the fire shortly after 6 o'clock. Mr. Yelland resides at North Unley, and shortly before 6 a.m. Mrs. Yelland noticed a black smoke rising from the city. She informed her husband, who got on the roof of a shed and formed the opinion that the fire was either in Messrs. Duncan & Fraser's. or the Lion Timber Mills, a few doors to the east along Franklin-street, little thinking that the Farmers' Union Building might be endangered. Mr. Yelland rode hurriedly to the city, and on his way heard the fire engine from Unley going to the fire.

"The two explosions had occurred before I reached the fire," said Mr. Yelland, "and when I got there the flames had extended widely in the motor establishment. The explosion seemed to have spread the flames, which soon got through the roof and were going up dangerously near

to the hardware department of the Farmers' Union adjoining. There was no chance of saving that as on the south side there was only a galvanized iron wall. It was through this galvanized iron structure that the fire reached the union's machinery building some time later. There was not much wind blowing at the time, and we noticed that the dense black smoke ascended almost straight into the air."

#### The Alarm Given.

#### A Driver's Graphic Story.

Mr. A. A. Matthew, a driver for the Adelaide Milk Supply Co-operative, who was delivering in the western end of the city in the early morning, was one of the first to notice the fire. Shortly after 5.30 a.m., he said, he noticed a thin column of smoke ascend from about the centre of Messrs. Duncan & Fraser's building. He immediately went to the Bristol Hotel, at the corner of Franklin and Eliza streets, and gave the alarm. A few minutes later the Brigade came through. The motor appliances careered madly over the newly-ploughed-up metal in Franklin-street, which is closed to traffic. Prior to their arrival the top floor of the building had burst into flames. The caretaker rushed to the front gates, which he threw open, and succeeded in getting several motor cars out of the building before the heat became unbearable. The licensee of the Bristol Hotel (Mr. D. H. Kenny) rushed out in his pyjamas, and managed to get his own car out of the garage, and no sooner had he done so than the roof over the front entrance collapsed.

Mr. Matthew paid a well-deserved tribute to the fearlessness of the firemen. As soon as they arrived, he said, they began to smash the plate-glass windows in order to get the hoses through, and so intent were they on their work that they were apparently oblivious to all peril. In addition to the glass they caused to fly with their hatchets, showers of hot broken glass and other debris fell about them from the burning floors above.

Mr. Matthew is of opinion that the fire started on the top floor and spread over that area before cating down into the building below. While travelling through the top floor the flames attacked the upper story of the building on the western alignment, where were Mrs. Wilkinson and her daughter and son-in-law, Mrs. and Mr. Johnson. They were quickly removed, but it was impossible to save the furniture. Towards 6 o'clock a terrific explosion shook the building, and Mr. Matthew surmised that it was made by the flames coming into contact with the oxy-acetylene plant.

#### Caretaker's Fright.

Separated from Duncan & Fraser's by a narrow lane is J. A. Johnson's Trustee Agency, the caretaker of which is Mrs. Wilkins, an elderly lady. She and her daughter were aroused early on Wednesday morning by the roar of an explosion close at hand, which appeared to shake the whole building. Miss Wilkinson, on going outside to see what had happened was horrified to find the adjacent motor garage and works ablaze from end to end. She hurried back to her mother, and the two women hurriedly dressed and packed a few valuables and necessities in a suitcase.

Mrs. Wilkinson intended to take the clock with her, but found it was almost red hot. The walls of the building were so hot that it was absolutely impossible for anyone to touch them, and she was unable to collect a few cherished photographs which have been scorched and blistered almost beyond recognition. The heat was stifling and both women were glad to get out in the fresh air. They were afterwards taken in and accommodated at a neighbor's house. In their hurried departure a set of false teeth and several trinkets were left behind, but Miss Wilkinson was able after a time to re-enter the house and collect them, which had apparently not suffered at all, although other articles in the vicinity had been cracked by the heat.

#### An Early Morning Crowd.

Miss Reid, who lives with her mother in the vicinity, gave a graphic account of the arrival of the early-morning spectators to a representative of "The Advertiser." "I was roused by an

explosion shortly after 5.30 a.m. on Wednesday morning," she stated. "The whole house shook and at first I thought that there had been an earthquake. Presently I heard another muffled roar, and then there was an un-wonted noise and bustle in the street. Hurrying to the front of the house I saw the first fire reels and engines arriving at Duncan & Fraser's, from which flames were already issuing. I hurried in to call the rest of the inmates and dressed as quickly as possible. By the time I reached our back gate, however, the fire appeared to have spread over the whole of Duncan & Fraser's, and the building was alight from end to end. My mother has two houses adjoining and I sleep in the one on the western side. When I called out to mother she thought that I said the boys' room at the back of our house was on fire and she received a terrible shock. We have a number of people staying in our houses and some of them were afraid lest the fire should reach us. We did drag out a lot of our belongings, but fortunately there was very little wind, and it was not in our direction.

"The fire presented a wonderful spectacle, but the heat was terrific. We could not stay at our back gate for a while, so intense was the heat, moreover the firemen warned us there might be an explosion at any time, owing to the petrol stored on the premises. The flames appeared to be leaping hundreds of feet into the air, and it was wonderful to see the firemen going about their work apparently in the very heart of a furnace. A tremendous crowd gathered, and one wondered where on earth the people could have come from at that hour. There were hundreds of cyclists present, and some of them had evidently dressed in a hurry. As soon as the firemen arrived they began to get the cars out of the building and it was not long before a strong posse of police were on the spot to keep the crowd back. There were showers of sparks, and what appeared to be flakes of fire every now and again, but the people to the west of Duncan & Frazer's were very lucky, as the wind was in the other direction. There is no doubt the firemen were hampered in their work by the slow pressure of water."

Waymouth-street Premises.

Fire Uncomfortably Close.

The premises of Messrs. Art Allison and Co., Miller's Lime Co., Mr. Ross, and Mr. W. G. G. Kendell's livery stables were saved, and little damage was done to any of them by fire or water. Mr. A. Allison said he was told by the guard on the Glenelg train shortly after 7 o'clock that the fire was "all round" his place. It got uncomfortably close, but the only damage he suffered was the breaking of two panes of glass and the "springing" of his office ceiling by the explosion which took place.

Mr. R. Harris, manager of Miller's Lime Company, said when he reached his office 10 minutes before 7 o'clock, Duncan and Fraser's appeared to be burnt out. The flames were then running up through the centre of the Farmers' Co-operative Union Building. A policeman had told him one of the new cars was driven out of Duncan Motors by an employe through a veritable whirlpool of flame.

In the stables of Mr. Kendell there were several horses, but they were removed to a place of safety by police and Mr. Conroy, of the Royal Mail stables, Waymouth-street. The flames got very close to one horse, but the frightened animal was led out in time. The fire first touched these premises, which had a very lucky escape. Next door, on the east, was the packing shed of the Farmers' Union, containing a large quantity of straw and other inflammable material. The firemen made a great save and had a tremendous fight to keep the flames from getting to this building.

The Work of the Police

The work of the fire-fighters was greatly facilitated by the police, who were also early on the scene and gave invaluable aid in keeping the streets in the vicinity reasonably clear to allow the firemen to manipulate the innumerable lengths of hose. Sub-Inspectors Hannon and McGrath were in charge of Sergeants Richardson, P. W. and M. Kennedy, Hipwell, Stuart, Gurry, and Gleeson had control of about twenty constables of the night watch who stayed on the spot until about 9 o'clock, when they were replaced by twenty constables of the morning

watch. There were also four mounted men from the barracks assisting to control the traffic. Bentham-street was kept absolutely clear so that the firemen had a free hand to move about without hindrance from pedestrians while Franklin-street, in front of the scene of the fire, was also stringently controlled. The police did their work with tact and efficiency and they found the crowd willing to make their duty easy.

#### Like a Chimney

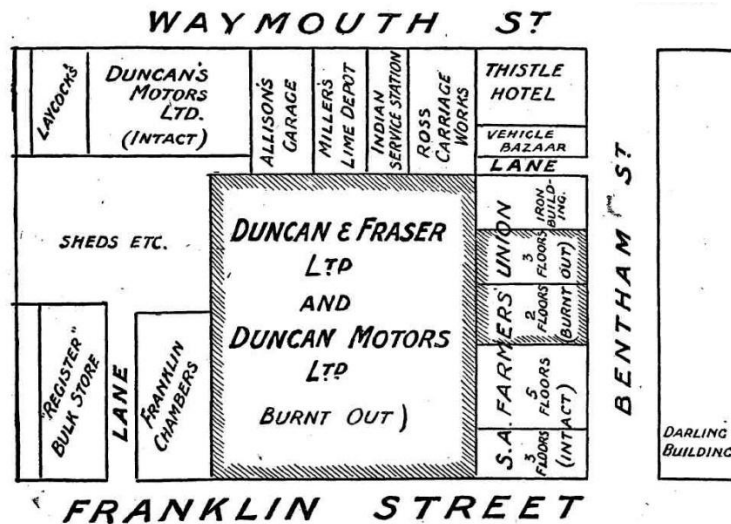
Some idea of the rapidity with which the fire spread may be gathered from a description of an eye-witness—"When I first saw it," he said, "it looked like a big chimney on fire with the flames and smoke going up in a straight column, but in a few seconds it was like a great bush fire, for the whole place was a sea of flame."

*Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1923), Wednesday 21 February 1923, page 1*

#### THIS MORNING'S BIG FIRE.



Views of the fire which gutted the premises of Duncan & Fraser, Limited, and Duncan Motors, Limited, and did considerable damage to the building of the South Australian Co-operative Farmer's Union, Limited. Our composite shows:—1. The pall of smoke over the city (view taken from high elevation in Waymouth street). 2. Front view of Duncan & Fraser's. 3. Hoses being played upon the fire. 4. Fire men combating the flames in portion of the Farmers' Union premises.



The above diagram depicts the whole block in which the fire occurred. Duncan & Fraser's were materially damaged. were burnt out, while the buildings of the Farmers' Union

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 22 February 1923, page 9**

**DISASTROUS CITY FIRE — MOTOR WORKS DESTROYED**

**DUNCAN & FRASER'S PREMISES BURNT OUT**

THREE HOURS OF FIRE FIGHTING.

TERRIFIC EXPLOSIONS OF PETROL

SEVERAL HUNRED MOTOR CARS LOST.

DAMAGE TO FARMERS UNION BLOCK.

A cyclist passing along Franklin street at about 5 a.m. on Wednesday saw the huge, prosperous establishments of Duncan's Motors, Limited, Duncan & Fraser's, limited, and the Farmers' Co-operative Union, standing intact, just as the employes had left them on the previous evening. A few hours later crumbled and broken walls, and about an acre of charred, and smoking ruins was practically all that marked the spot where they had been. Starting in the workshops of Duncan's Motors, Limited, a fire spread and assumed disastrous proportions, swept through Duncan & Fraser's premises, and wiped out half of the block of buildings occupied by the Farmers' Union. Every fireman and fire-fighting appliance in the metropolitan area were called into action, but the flames had too powerful a hold by the time they arrived, and the most they could do was to confine them to their existing limits. It was one of the biggest fires which ever occurred in Adelaide, and at a rough estimate, the total damage is probably in the region of £200,000. The premises were well covered by insurance.

The vast column of black smoke which issues daily from the chimney at the premises of the Adelaide Electric Supply; Company at the eastern end of Grenfell street, Adelaide, has often been mistaken by suburbanites for a fire in the city. On Wednesday morning, early risers who saw a pall of smoke overhanging the metro-polis at first paid no attention to it, but as the minutes went by the smoke clouds thickened and changed colour. It was then it was realized that a monster fire was raging somewhere in Adelaide. Those fortunate enough to possess motors, horses and traps, motor cycles, push bikes, or any other form of conveyance, hastily tumbled into their clothes and rushed city wards. Guided by the eddyng smoke clouds, which rose to a prodigious height in the still morning air, sightseers turned into Franklin and Waymonth streets. There a marvellous sight met their eyes. Huge buildings, which on the previous day, had been the scene of humming industry, providing employment for hundreds of men, women, girls, and boys, were enveloped in leaping, lurid flames, which rose high

above the surrounding structures, and were visible for many miles. The large and valuable premises occupied by Duncan's Motors, Limited, and Duncan & Fraser's, Limited, were doomed. Work heroically as they might, the firemen could do little against their dread enemy, which had obtained too powerful a hold on the building before the arrival of the brigades. It is not known exactly who gave the first alarm; but at about a quarter to 6 Foot Constable Hughes, seeing the flames from Wakefield street, ran to King William street, and gave the warning from the alarm in front of Politis's fish shop. Others also sent out the news, and a few minutes later the red-painted vehicles were on the scene discharging firemen and hoses with lightning speed. When they arrived, Duncan's Motors, Limited, was well alight from end to end, and burning furiously. Realizing immediately the seriousness of the position, Chief Officer J. E. Dickie, at Adelaide headquarters, called up all the Norwood, Unley, Thebarton, and North Adelaide firemen and appliances. This he did before leaving for the fire himself.

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#### AWE-INSPIRING SCENE.

The nerve-tensing jangle of the fire-bells as motor fire appliances tore to the scene from all directions was mingled with the awe-inspiring roar and clatter of the flames as they burst their way through walls and windows, sending embers and shattered glass flying into the street. Into the raging inferno, swarms of firemen, their brass helmets reflecting the glow of the fire, were pouring streams of water from lines, of swelling hoses, which stretched in all directions. The heat was terrific, and the rapidly increasing crowds of bystanders were forced to get back to the walls on the opposite side of Franklin street, and even there it was most uncomfortable. It was soon apparent that the premises of Duncan's Motors Limited were beyond saving. The one motor pump appliance possessed by the South Australian Fire Brigade was stationed in Franklin street, in front of Duncan & Frasers, Ltd., and this augmented the pressure from the main. The firemen concentrated in an attempt to save a portion of Duncan and Fraser's premises, attacking the flames from in front, and from a little lane at the rear.

#### STARTLING DEVELOPMENT.

The spectacle was such as has seldom if ever been seen in Adelaide before. Every available fireman in the metropolitan area threw his heart and soul, and for all he knew, his life, into the work of attempting to save somebody else's property. Ladders were reared against the walls of the burning buildings; firemen directed powerful streams of water into the seething heart of the conflagration; the crashing and smashing of falling iron and timber, and the explosion of motor tyres and petrol, combined to set up a pandemonium which was calculated to strike terror into the hearts of the bravest. Then, interrupting the firemen in their attempt to save a part of Duncan & Fraser's, came a sudden startling development.

#### FARMERS' UNION BUILDING ALIGHT.

The fire had eaten its way into the hardware department of the Farmers' Co-operative Union Building in Bentham street (between Franklin and Waymouth streets), and had secured a good hold. The motor fire pump was moved to the corner of Bentham and Franklin streets, and several lines of hoses were diverted down Bentham street. A vigorous attack was made upon the fire in the hardware store, but little could be done. Only a thin brick wall had divided the rear of the store from the inferno in Duncan and Fraser's, and the steel shutters over the windows and door had been burst in by the flames, which speedily got to work upon the already smouldering interior, the whole of which seemed to burst simultaneously into flame.

This was a serious matter, as many firemen had to be taken off the fire in Franklin street to cope with the new outbreak

#### DUNCAN & FRASER'S GUTTED.

Despite the most valiant efforts of the firefighters, it was impossible to save any part of Duncan's, Limited, or Duncan and Fraser's, Limited, whose premises soon be-came a total ruin. A few firemen were left to play water upon the indescribable wreckage, and the remainder were directed into Bentham street. Here the position was rapidly becoming worse. The big four-story machinery warehouse, which adjoined the hardware, department, had caught alight on the second and third floors. By that time the hardware department was completely gutted, and, with the exception of quantities of inflammable material, probably oil and petrol, the flames had been extinguished in the immediate vicinity. Thus attacked by flames from the rear and on side, the machinery building had no chance, and was soon a roaring furnace. Firemmen mounted the antiquated horse-drawn ladder, and fought the names from the top floor, oblivious to the fact that the very framework of the windows through which they leaned was burning all around them. They maintained this position, doing good work for several minutes, until the flames burst through the front windows of the first floor, and licking round the ladder, threatened to cut off their re-treat. They were forced to beat a precipitate retreat to the roadway, where groups of firemen hung on to the kicking hoses and directed powerful streams of water with unerring aim into the heart of the fresh outburst. The big plateglass windows on the ground floor, behind with petrol engines, harvesters, &c., were on show, surrendering to the terrific heat, burst outward on to the street with a succession of echoing crashes which could be heard all over the block.

#### STRENUOUS TIME IN BENTHAM STREET.

Practically the whole of the firemen numbering 14 from the suburbs, and 33 from Adelaide headquarters— now concentrated in Bentham street. More than half of the Farmers' Co-operative Union Buildings were gutted or hopelessly aflame, and smoke had already begun to issue from the windows of the five story corner block, which contained the furniture showrooms, and the offices, &c. Through the gaping windows, on the topmost floors —the glass had long ago burst in—glowing sparks could be seen, and fears were entertained for the safety of that portion of the block. Fortunately, the fire had almost burned itself out in the hardware department, and this acted as a break between the big corner block, and the blazing machinery warehouse. The glass doors giving access from the street were burst in by the firemen, who swiftly had a line of hose inside the furniture department. Chief Officer Dickie considers it certain that it was only the automatic sprinklers in the big building which saved it from total destruction. The firm had the sprinklers installed about 12 months ago, and they can congratulate themselves upon the fact, as, but for this precaution, they would have lost everything. As soon as the heat reached a certain temperature, the sprinklers automatically began to operate, showering water all over the contents and walls of every floor, completely flooding the establishment. With the exception of a little charred woodwork inside the windows nearest the flames, there was no damage from fire, although the value of the contents will have been lessened on account of their having been saturated with water.

#### SPREADING RAPIDLY.

For the conflagration to spread from the motor works, through the old building in Bentham street, occupied by the Farmers' Union, and on to the new block alongside, was the matter of a comparatively very short time. Of the old block there was nothing left by 7.30 a.m., but a tangled mass of burnt wood and iron. The adjacent building then caught on, the second and third floors, the flames attacking from both the side and rear. Several hoses were immediately concentrated in that quarter, but the task was an almost hopeless one. As the flames spread to the top floor, others from the motor workshops attacked the building on the bottom floor, and almost instantly the place was a seething, spitting mass of burning woodwork. With the aid of the ladders the firemen were able to direct a stream of water into the top stories, but it was unsafe to venture in side the building, because of collapsing beams and galvanized iron.

#### TREMENDOUS HEAT.

The windows were one by one cracked by the severe heat, and the noise of the splitting and falling glass could be heard from some distance away. At about 7.45 portions of the roof and ceilings began to cave in, and at times the thunder of the falling material was almost deafening. So great was the heat emitted from the burning building that the paint work on the large front door of an office on the other side of the lane, about 20 yards away, was blistered. A galvanized iron fence a similar distance away became almost too hot to touch with the bare hand.

#### TERRIFIC EXPLOSION.

A loud explosion in the early hours of the morning drew many persons — even those residing in the foothills — to their windows and verandahs, and from every home in the metropolitan area, dense clouds of smoke could be seen issuing from a burning building. The noise was caused by the explosion of a petrol tank on the premises of Duncan & Fraser, Limited. The fiercely burning petrol leapt high into the air and splashed against portion of the western wall of the Farmers' Co-operative Union, Limited. Clinging to the brickwork, it re-presented a flaming, angry creeper, growing with startling rapidity. The flames quickly got hold of the woodwork of the windows, devouring them greedily. The heat thus caused set in operation the automatic sprinklers with which the building was thoroughly equipped, and this materially aided the firemen in their work of extinction. Had it not been for the sprinklers it is probable that the building would have suffered to the same extent as those at its side and rear. In a large room at the top of the building there was stored a quantity of cane chairs, rugs, carpets, linoleum, bedsteads, and so on. Miraculously, very little of this stock was damaged. The room itself, however, suffered to a greater extent. The flames came in the windows and spread rapidly to the rafters. The greater portion of the ceiling was burnt beyond repair, but the brigade quickly located the danger, and effected a praiseworthy save.

#### DAMAGED BY WATER.

Luckily the records, ledgers, and so on, of the Union Company remained, practically unharmed. It is understood, however, that some damage was done to the records contained in the Wheat Pool Department, although to what extent has not yet been ascertainable. A safe on the ground floor was untouched, and the strongroom in the basement passed unscathed except for the water that percolated through from the floors above. It is probable that a great deal of damage was done by the water from the hoses and the automatic sprinklers. After about two hours the water had oozed through ceilings and inner walls, and, in places, through the outer walls of the building. Continued on next page.

#### DISASTROUS CITY FIRE — MOTOR WORKS DESTROYED

Continued from previous page.

#### THE FINAL EPISODE.

The end of the danger came about 8.30, after the worn-out firemen had been combating the menace for more than two hours and a half. At 8 o'clock the machinery warehouse was still burning fiercely, the ground floor having caught well alight. It was impossible for the firemen to advance more than a few feet inside the main door, from which, standing almost hidden by clouds of smoke and perspiring profusely in the terrible heat, they directed the hissing streams of water. Eventually, however, the last of the fire was got under control, and the weary fire-men, some of whom could hardly stand owing to fatigue, let alone hold on to the squirting hoses, were given a brief respite. By about 8.30 the danger was over, and, leaving a few firemen to play the water on the smouldering ruins, the remainder prepared to gather up the hoses and equipment and depart for their respective bases. The first of the machines began to leave about 9 a.m., more than three hours after the alarm had been given.

NEW MOTOR PREMISES, £50,000.

Mr. A. W. Duncan stated last night that their insurances totalled £90,000. He could not estimate the damage. A new building, of brick or stone, would be erected on the site, and would cost about £50,000, and be on most modern lines for convenience and safety. Tenders would be called so soon as the plans had been settled.

The building would be one of three or four storeys, and would have a frontage of 140 to Franklin street, by a depth of 212 ft, with a right-of-way to Waymouth street. Orders for replacements of some of the plant had been lodged in Sydney and Melbourne, and certain machines would leave Melbourne by train that night The firm was making provision to keep all the employes together.



B 70471 Reproduction rights: State Library of South Australia

*State Library of South Australia - Fire at Duncan and Fraser, Franklin Street, Adelaide [B 70471], The fire at the premises of Duncan and Fraser Ltd / Duncan Motors Ltd, motor car importers and manufacturers at 42-50 Franklin Street, Adelaide. The premises caught fire 21 February 1923 and caused damage to the building of the SA Farmers' Co-op Union buildings in Bentham Street. (This view is looking north; the street where the crowd is Waymouth Street.) Taken from a nearby vantage point, the fire brigade ladders can be seen. 1923. Part of Acre 240 Collection*



B 70472 Reproduction rights: State Library of South Australia

*State Library of South Australia - Fire at Duncan and Fraser, Franklin Street, Adelaide [B 70472], Fire on 21 February 1923 at the premises of Duncan & Fraser / Duncan Motors Ltd, motor car importers and manufacturers at 42-50 Franklin Street, Adelaide. A number of firemen are standing amidst the collapsed building, with smoke all around. 1923. Part of Acre 240 Collection*



B 70473

*State Library of South Australia - Fire at Duncan and Fraser, Franklin Street, Adelaide [B 70473], View of the facade of the premises of Duncan & Fraser Ltd / Duncan Motors Ltd,*

*motor car importers and manufacturers at 42-50 Franklin Street, Adelaide, following a major fire on 21 February 1923. 1923. Part of Acre 240 Collection*



*State Library of South Australia - Franklin Street, Adelaide [B 1200], Franklin Street, Adelaide, showing the premises of Duncan & Fraser after the fire on February 21st 1923. For a view of premises subsequently erected, see B 2289. Also see B 1201 for another view of fire damage. 1923. Photographer, Observer, newspaper. Part of Acre 240 Collection.*



*State Library of South Australia - Bentham Street, Adelaide [B 1201], Bentham Street, Adelaide, showing the business premises of the S.A. Farmers' Co-operative Union after damage by fire on 21st February 1923. The left side of the three storey building on the right is 71 yards south of Waymouth Street. The right side is 50 and a half yards south of Waymouth*

*Street. For a view of premises subsequently erected on this site, see B 2657. Also see B 1200 for another view of fire damage. 1923. Part of Acre 239 Collection.*



B 34376 Reproduction rights: State Library of South Australia

*State Library of South Australia - Franklin Street [B 34376], Franklin Street, north side, showing the aftermath of the fire at the S.A.Farmers' Co-operative Union building in February 1923. 1923. Part of Acre 239 Collection.*



B 46119

*State Library of South Australia - Premises of Duncan Motors Ltd in Franklin Street [B 46119], Premises of Duncan Motors Ltd in Franklin Street, Adelaide following destruction by fire on 21 February 1923. 1923. Photographer, Smith, D. Darian. Part of General Collection.*



PRG 280/1/28/95

*State Library of South Australia - Damage caused by fire at Duncan & Fraser's factory [PRG 280/1/28/95], Workmen clearing up debris caused by a major fire at Duncan & Fraser's motor car factory in Adelaide. 1923. Part of Searcy Collection.*



PRG 280/1/30/169

*State Library of South Australia - Fire damage at Duncan and Fraser, Franklin Street, Adelaide [PRG 280/1/30/169], The destruction caused by a major fire at the premises of Duncan and Fraser, motor car importers and manufacturers in Franklin Street, Adelaide. 1923. Part of Searcy Collection.*



PRG 280/1/30/277

***State Library of South Australia - A fire at the premises of Duncan & Fraser Ltd., Adelaide [PRG 280/1/30/277], A fire at the premises of Duncan & Fraser Ltd. in Franklin Street, Adelaide. 1923. Part of Searcy Collection.***



PRG 280/1/35/100

***State Library of South Australia - A fire at Franklin Street, Adelaide [PRG 280/1/35/100], An overhead view of destruction caused by a large fire at premises in Franklin Street, Adelaide. 1922. Part of Searcy Collection.***



PRG 280/1/38/243

*State Library of South Australia - Two Fire Brigade officers [PRG 280/1/38/243], Two Fire Brigade officers photographed attending the fire which destroyed the premises of coachbuilders Duncan & Fraser Limited in Adelaide, South Australia. 1923. Part of Searcy Collection.*



PRG 280/1/40/48

*State Library of South Australia - Firemen attending a fire in Adelaide [PRG 280/1/40/48], Firemen attending a fire at the premises of Duncan and Fraser Ltd., motor car importers in Franklin Street, Adelaide; buckled iron and burnt wood is piled up in front of the building which*

*is still smoking. 1923. Part of Searcy Collection.*



PRG 280/1/41/180

*State Library of South Australia - A fire at Duncan & Fraser Ltd., Adelaide [PRG 280/1/41/180], Thick smoke from a fire at the premises of Duncan & Fraser Ltd., motor car importers and manufacturers at 46 Franklin Street, Adelaide; the silhouette of a man watching the blaze is in the background. 1923. Part of Searcy Collection.*



PRG 280/1/42/336

*State Library of South Australia - Premises of Duncan & Fraser destroyed by fire [PRG 280/1/42/336], A fireman dousing the smouldering wreckage of the premises of Duncan & Fraser Ltd., motor car importers of Adelaide, which has been destroyed by fire. 1923. Part of Searcy Collection.*



B 34374 Reproduction rights: State Library of South Australia

*State Library of South Australia - Franklin Street [B 34374], Franklin Street, showing the aftermath of the fire at the premises of Duncan & Fraser Ltd. in February 1923. 1923. Part of Acre 240 Collection.*



B 34375 Reproduction rights: State Library of South Australia

*State Library of South Australia - Franklin Street [B 34375], Franklin Street, north side, showing the aftermath of the fire at the premises of Duncan & Fraser Ltd. in February 1923. 1923. Part of Acre 240 Collection.*

**Express (Adelaide, SA : 1922 - 1923), Friday 23 February 1923, page 4**

A SMALL FIRE.

About 2 o'clock this afternoon, a small fire broke out near the engineroom of the Waverley Vinegar Works, West-terrace. The fire brigade promptly answered a call, and succeeded in extinguishing the blaze.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 24 February 1923, page 3**

#### FIRE IN CITY

#### THOUSANDS CONGREGATE.

#### BRIGADE PREVENTS BIG BLAZE.

Following so closely upon the huge conflagration in Franklin Street, the clanging of the bells and the rattle of the appliances of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade as it dashed down King William Street shortly after 7 o'clock this evening attracted thousands of people to Hindley Street. Fortunately, another big and destructive fire was not to be witnessed. Such, however, might easily have been the case had it not been for the prompt warning of the brigade and the efficiency of the firemen.

The brigade received the call from an alarm in Hindley Street at 7.16 p.m., and on arrival found the furniture manufacturing premises of F. H. Ring & Co., of Rosina Street, ablaze. The factory, which is a two-storey brick building, measuring about 40 by 50 ft., stands at the rear of two cottages tenanted by Mr. S. Tilley and Mrs. S. Lippey. It was the 15-year-old son of the former, A. Tilley, an employe at the firm's showrooms, who gave the alarm. These cottages face Solomon Street, which runs east and west. A printing house adjoined on the northern side, a lane running from Rosina Street into the factory. No adjacent buildings were damaged by fire.

Mr. Ring arrived at the factory about the time the firemen were ceasing operations. He told a "Mail" representative that the premises were secured by the foreman (Mr. Wood) about 11.45 a.m. that day. Mr. D. B. See, of Sydney, was the owner of the premises, which were insured. Mr. Ring said his own plant and machinery were also covered by insurance. He could not estimate the damage done at present. Deputy Superintendent Cooper, of the Fire Brigade, said he could say no more than that the factory and contents were damaged by fire. The cause of the outbreak was unknown.

**Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1923), Tuesday 27 February 1923, page 1**

#### THE FIRE BRIGADE

#### PARLIAMENT TO ACT

#### Enquiry into Recent Blaze

On Wednesday morning the City Coroner (Dr. Ramsay Smith) will enquire into the cause of the disastrous fire, which destroyed the motor factory of Duncan and Fraser, Limited, and portion of the buildings belonging to the South Australian Farmers' Union. At a meeting of Cabinet, on Monday, it was decided to introduce a Bill into Parliament to authorize the Fire Brigades Board to borrow £25,000, for the purpose of obtaining better fire-fighting equipment. The loan will be raised on debentures, payable in 10 years. The proportions of the bodies contributing to the maintenance of the brigades will be:— Government, three-ninths; insurance companies, four-ninths; and municipal bodies, two-ninths. Statement by the Chairman. When his attention was directed on Tuesday to the statement in The Register by Mr. E. P. Auld, and the comments by Cr. Cain at the meeting of the Adelaide City Council regarding fire-fighting appliances in Adelaide, the Chairman of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board (Mr. E. Frinsdorf) said there was nothing to add to nor subtract from his statements published in The Register on Saturday, except that he would like to amplify the information imparted respecting a debenture loan, which request the Government had acceded to. Mr. Frinsdorf said:—"At a meeting of the Fire Brigades Board on February 16 (several days before the Franklin street fire) I recommended to the board that the Chief Secretary be

respectfully asked to take the necessary steps to obtain an extension of the powers of the Fire Brigades Act, 1913, under which the board may be permitted to borrow by way of debentures the sum of £25,000, the term of such debentures to be 10 years, and the debentures to be issued as and when required subject to the consent of the Chief Secretary; the proceeds of such debenture issue to be applied to the express purpose of providing such additional equipment as may be considered necessary or desirable." This proposal was unanimously adopted by the board.

***Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Wednesday 28 February 1923, page 4***

DUNCAN & FRASER'S FIRE

INQUEST OPENED

EVIDENCE OF CARETAKERS

Adelaide, Wednesday.

The disastrous fire which demolished Duncan and Fraser's motor works in Franklin-street last week and also burnt out the premises of Duncan Motors Limited was the subject of a coronial inquiry by Dr. Ramsay Smith in the Industrial Court this afternoon.

Robert James Jackson Willis, a clerk, residing at 85 Franklin-street, city, said he was sleeping outside on the balcony of the first floor of his house on the night of February 20. He was awakened by one of the boarders, Mr. M'Adam, between 5.30 a.m. and 5.40 a.m. He observed smoke issuing from Duncan and Fraser's premises, and immediately he gave the alarm to the fire brigade. The place was well alight at the time. William Henry Cumber residing at 127 Halifax-street, said that he was employed at night time for Duncan Motors Limited in Franklin-street. On the morning of February 21 he was in the building where the fire occurred. During the night he was engaged in cleaning the firm's travellers' motor cars. About 5.30 a.m. his attention was attracted by a noise like stones being thrown on the iron ; he was then on the ground floor of Duncan Motors Limited, and was changing his clothes. He was about 200ft. or more from the front of the building. On investigating the cause of the noise he ran inside the building towards Franklin-street to the main entrance. He met the caretaker, Mr. Fenn, who was opening the door. After doing that Fenn ran to the gate leading into Mr. Pomeroy's yard. Witness then hastened back to the northern portion of the building, and, picking up his clothes, threw them into a motor car, which he drove into Franklin-street. He ran back to bring out another motor car, but was stopped by a constable.

Arthur A. Fenn, caretaker, employed by Duncan and Fraser and Duncan Motors Limited, deposed that his duties began from closing time at night until opening time next morning. On February 21 he was awakened at 5.40 a.m. by the sound of material falling on the floor and the noise of wind. He was then in the extreme south-western side of the building. On getting out of bed he saw the glare of a blaze which came from the north-eastern portion of Duncan and Fraser's premises. He ran straight for the telephone to call the fire brigade, but, being unable to raise "Central," he hurried back to his room, put on his clothes, picked up his keys, and rushed for the front door. He opened the door with the intention of going to the Bristol Hotel fire alarm, but as he went out he observed the fire brigade coming from the direction of Victoria Square.

When the witness had concluded his evidence the Coroner asked whether it was necessary to call the policeman who was on duty in Franklin-street. He was, however, informed that there was no constable on the beat after 3 a.m. The Coroner said he thought that evidence should be called to show the structural nature of the wood and iron partition on the side of the Farmers' Union building.

"This is a new development," remarked Dr. Smith, who adjourned the inquest until 10.30 a.m. on Thursday to enable the necessary evidence to be obtained.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 3 March 1923, page 43***

#### FIRE IN ROSINA-STREET.

The Fire Brigade on Saturday evening quickly extinguished a fire in a furniture factory in Rosina-street, Adelaide. An alarm was given about a quarter past 7 by the 15-year-old son of Mr. S. Tilley, and the firemen found the two-storey factory of Messrs. F. H. Ring & Co., at the rear of cottages occupied by Mr. Tilley and Mrs. S. Lippey, alight. The fire was put out after damage had been done, but Mr. Ring could not estimate the amount of his loss. The building, plant, and stock were insured. The building is owned by Mr. D. B. See, of Sydney. The cause of the outbreak is not known.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 9 March 1923, page 10**

#### MOTOR CAR ON FIRE.

Just before 3 o'clock on Thursday morning the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to the premises of Mr. C. D. Likow, of Kent street (off Carrington street), city. The rear portion of Mr. Likow's motor car was on fire, but the flames were soon quenched. The extent of the damage, and the cause of the outbreak, are unknown.

**Observer (Adelaide, SA : 1905 - 1931), Saturday 10 March 1923, page 43**

#### DUNCAN & FRASER'S FIRE.

##### Coroner's Verdict

Origin of Outbreak Unknown.

The City Coroner (Dr. Ramsay Smith), in his verdict delivered at the Industrial Court Building on Friday, March 2, concerning the Franklin street fire, said:—"I narrow down the finding to one issue—the origin of the fire—and the verdict is that the evidence does not show how the fire which occurred on February 21 on the premises of Duncan & Fraser, Limited, and Duncan Motors, Limited, originated."

In reviewing the evidence, the Coroner stated:—Early in the morning of February 21, Mr. Willis, who was sleeping on the balcony of the first floor of a house in Franklin street, was awakened by Mr. McAdam. He rose, went down the street, and saw Mr. McAdam at a fire alarm in Franklin street. The time he got up was between 5.30 and 5.40. He saw Duncan & Fraser's premises well alight, ablaze with flames and smoking, the fire evidently being at some distance from the Franklin street front, and about the fifth or sixth window from the west end of the upper story. That would be, roughly, half-way along the building. He saw no one the street but Mr McAdam. P.C. Thorsen, on duty in Currie street, noticed smoke at about 5.40, in the direction of Franklin street, and broke the fire alarm in Currie street about 5.40 to 5.45. He waited three or four minutes and then went to Franklin street. He noticed the front of the premises alight. The fire brigade was at work. William Henry Coumbe, who was employed by Duncan Motors, Limited, and was working over-night on the premises, had his attention attracted while on the ground floor, about 5.35 to 5.40, by a noise like stones thrown on iron. He ran towards the entrance in Franklin street, and saw flames in Duncan and Fraser's, on the first floor, about 70 ft. from Franklin street, and on the north east part of the block. He saw Mr. Fenn, the caretaker, run and open the front door. Mr. Fenn, the caretaker on both of the premises, was awakened about 5.40 by a sound of material falling on the floor, and by "a sound of wind." He got up and saw a blaze in the north-east portion of Duncan & Fraser's premises on the first floor. He tried to telephone to the brigade, but failed. He saw the partition at the north-east corner between Duncan and Fraser's and the Farmers' Union ablaze with flame.

#### Fire Brigade Evidence.

Mr. Cooper, the officer in charge of the Fire Brigade at Adelaide, said he received a call from the Franklin street fire alarm at 5.30, and reached the fire about a minute later. The whole premises were then ablaze. The flames were coming out from all the windows in Franklin

street and from the lane on the western side, both from the ground and the first floors, The alarm was received at the Fire Station at 5.50 from Franklin street, and one may assume that that was the time at which it was given at Franklin street by Mr. McAdam. The time given by Mr. Willis, therefore, is liable to a correction, which would bring his first sight of the fire about 5.45. Mr. Bland, with the Norwood Fire Brigade, arrived at the premises at 6.5. The fire was then very fierce in the north-west of Duncan and Fraser's. The flames were rising high along the whole of the western wall of the Farmers' Union as far as he could see towards Franklin street. The partition was still standing, while the whole of Duncan and Fraser's premises had fallen in. On arrival he saw no evidence of fire on the Farmers' Union.

#### First Location of Fire.

From the evidence it appears that the fire was first seen by outside people between 5.30 and 5.40, and also by the two men in the building about the same time—5.35 to 5.40. The Fire Station received the alarm at 5.50, and the brigade reached the premises about 5.51. The evidence of the two men in the building is that the fire was seen by them, individually, at the north-east corner of Duncan and Fraser's premises, adjoining the Farmers' Union—that it was located there—about 5.35 to 5.40. When the Fire Brigade arrived at about 5.51 the whole of the extensive premises was ablaze. The evidence of the witness, Mr. Willis, is that there was fire at some distance from the Franklin street front and about the fifth or sixth window from the west—thus not at the north-east corner of the premises.

#### A Mystery.

The problem that presents itself is—How could a fire, originating in an extreme corner of a building of this size and structure, spread from one point (the north-east corner) over the whole of the building in a calm night in about 11 minutes or less? Even if the fire seen by Mr. Willis had been distinct from that seen by the two inmates—and the evidence does not exclude this possibility—the nature and significance of the problem of origin is very little changed. No evidence as to any conditions of the structure and contents of the building was tendered or was forthcoming when I suggested that such evidence might be available. There is, therefore, nothing in the evidence that casts any light on the cause of such an unusual happening; for, according to the evidence of the Fire Brigade officer, it was an unusual happening. In all his experience he had never seen, heard, or read of any similar occurrence. This is the mystery connected with this fire, and no explanation of it has been even suggested by any of the witnesses. As to any suggestion that the fire originated in the Farmers' Union, there is nothing to support such an opinion, and the evidence excludes the supposition. Even had it done so, the mystery of the spread of the fire in the premises of Duncan & Fraser and Duncan Motors would be as great as before. On some incidental matters, such as the provision and management of fire appliances in the buildings, the evidence speaks for itself.

Mr. G. M. Evan appeared for Duncan and Fraser, Limited, and Duncan Motors, Limited; Mr. E. Frinsdorf for the Fire Brigades Board; and Mr. H. B. Piper for the South Australian Farmers' Co-operative Union, Limited.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 19 March 1923, page 10**

#### A SMALL FIRE.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call at 2.16 a.m. on Sunday, to the premises of Messrs. Colton, Palmer & Preston, Currie-street, where a rubbish waggon was alight. The rubbish waggon was in the forwarding department. A little stock was burnt, a platform charred, and the waggon destroyed. Mr. A. H. Preston, a member of the firm, said the waggon was filled with packing refuse. He had no idea how the fire started. The Brigade made a good save, and prevented what might have become a disastrous fire.

#### FIRE IN A FACTORY.

The Fire Brigade received a call to the factory of Messrs. A, Simpson & Son in Waymouth-street, at 7.14 a.m. on Saturday. A portion of the floor of the electroplating shop was damaged.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 29 March 1923, page 8**

#### FIRE BRIGADE'S APPLIANCES

The Chairman of the Fire Brigades' Board has reported that negotiations are proceeding by cablegram through Messrs. George Wills & Company, Limited, for the purchase of new appliances, considered necessary for the further equipment of the South Australian brigades.

**Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Saturday 31 March 1923, page 2**

#### SEVERAL SMALL FIRES.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade were called to extinguish a number of small fires on Thursday night. One alarm was received at 5.30 p.m. from Mrs. McDonald's Coffee Palace, Hindley street, when a spark from the kitchen caused a blaze which damaged a portion of the roof and fascia. At 8 p.m. the alarm was sounded from Mills street, Dulwich where a small motor truck was found to be afire. A rubbish fire at Edwards' boot factory, Maud street, New Parkside, received attention at 8.3 p.m. Just after midnight (12.58) a call was received from Childers street, North Adelaide, where a Buick motor car was a slightly damaged by fire.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 11 April 1923, page 8**

#### FIRE AT RUBBISH DESTRUCTOR.

A fire broke out at the Rubbish Destructor in Halifax street, city, at about 10.30 o'clock on Tuesday night. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade was quickly summoned, and arrived before much damage was done.

**Recorder (Port Pirie, SA : 1919 - 1954), Wednesday 11 April 1923, page 1**

#### MOTOR CAR ON FIRE.

ADELAIDE, Tuesday.—A motor car owned by Mr. H. J. Doman, of Joslyn, was burned at the corner of North Terrace and Pulteney street to-night. The fire was caused by the backfiring of the carburettor, and the car was considerably damaged. The fire brigade extinguished the conflagration.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 12 April 1923, page 11**

#### FIRE AT NORTH UNLEY.

During the first hour of this morning the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was summoned to No. 11 Robert street, North Unley, the residence of Mr. W. P. Macdonald. who is at present absent from home. A passing motorist gave the alarm to the Metropolitan Brigade, which, in turn, notified the Unley station. Reels from both brigades soon arrived on the scene. It was found that a shed constructed of galvanized iron and wood, and containing several articles of furniture and other property, was ablaze. The fire was soon under control, although not in time to prevent considerable damage. The destruction was roughly estimated to involve a sum of about £300.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Friday 13 April 1923, page 12**

#### A SMALL FIRE.

Shortly before 6 a.m. on Thursday a fire was noticed in the south-western corner of the Telegraph Department's yard at West-terrace. The Fire Brigade was summoned, and quickly extinguished the flames. Slight damage was done to a rack containing dismantled telegraph and telephone material.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 27 April 1923, page 12**

A LOCOMOTIVE ABLAZE.

There was excitement among people waiting at the Adelaide Railway Station for the arrival of the East-West express, at about 8 o'clock on Thursday evening, when the under carriage of the engine of the Pinnaroo train, which had just pulled into the station, burst into flames and burned with such force that some of onlookers feared an explosion. Persons in the vicinity went as far as they could from the scene of the blaze, without obscuring their view, and the consensus of opinion seemed to be that an explosion would take place. After a few minutes' waiting, however, the fire subsided, and every one gathered round to ascertain the cause of the outbreak. It was found that the flames had been due to escaping gas from a pipe coming into contact with the heat of the engine furnace. The consequent explosion ignited the oil on the undercarriage, which burned furiously for a while. Fortunately little damage resulted. While the flames were at their height the enginedriver kept his presence of mind and slowly backed the engine out of the station for a short distance. The metropolitan fire brigade was summoned, but its services were not required.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 8 May 1923, page 8**

FIRE BRIGADE PLANT.

Particularly since the disastrous fire which gutted Duncan & Fraser's motor factory, in Franklin street, and portion of the premises belonging to the South Australian Farmers' Union, there has been considerable agitation for improved firefighting equipment in Adelaide. The matter reached a further stage on Monday after-noon, when the Chairman of the Special Committee regarding the Fire Brigades' Board expenditure, reported to the City Council that the committee had been appointed by the council, as it was felt that some provision should be made by the Fire Brigades' Board, for the establishment of a separate fund to provide for the purchase of plant as required. The estimate as at present prepared by that board only provided for the ordinary working expenses for the current 12 months. The committee, after having discussed the matter, were of opinion that it was necessary that the Fire Brigades' Board, in preparing its annual estimates, should include therein every year such fixed amount as in its opinion was required to establish a fund to meet the cost of the replacement and extension of its plant, the contributions to the fund to be made on the same basis as provided in section 54 of the Fire Brigades Act, 1913, and to be invested by the board, the interest of such investment to be added to the fund. The committee further recommended that the foregoing opinion should be conveyed to the council's representative on the board. The recommendation was approved.

**Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1923), Wednesday 20 June 1923, page 1**

CITY WATER SUPPLY.

Increased Pressure.

Projected Improvements.

Mr. C. A. Bayer (the Hydraulic Engineer), when seen on Wednesday morning by a representative of The Register, stated that on his recommendation the Government had recently sanctioned the laying of a large water main from the Millbrook Reservoir, which would have the effect of greatly increasing the city supply, so much so, that even on the hottest of days in the summer, when the draw was greatest, it would be possible to keep the maximum pressure in the pipes. Mr. Bayer estimated that the pressure would be increased by at least 30 per cent.

Details of the Work.

In describing the details of the new work, Mr. Bayer said that a 30-inch pipe would be taken off the end of the 3 ft. Millbrook trunk main on the North-east road, continuing down this road

to Hackney, thence a 24 inch along North terrace to the King William street junction, and from that point it would be of 18 inches in diameter to West terrace. All the pipes would of the same type as the present Millbrook main, namely, locking bar steel, and tenders would be advertised at an early date. As the big main sup-down the Hackney road, the main supplies for the eastern suburbs would be connected with it, and increased pressures would be registered in all the pipes in those districts, especially the higher levels. It was also intended to connect the suggested terminus of the main on West terrace with the supplies to the large manufacturing works in Mile-End, Southwark, and other places in the western suburbs. The new main would be capable of discharging an additional. 7,500 gallons a minute under a working pressure of 50 lb. to the square inch at the King William street intersection, and this would have the effect of greatly increasing the supply in many of the city streets. The added pressure would prove a great boon to manufacturing industries in the city, and would be greatly appreciated by the Fire Brigade when combating fires. The waterworks men, at the request and cost of the Fire Brigades Board, are now placing 10 extra fire hydrants in King William street, and it was anticipated that further hydrants would be put in when the increased water supply was available.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Tuesday 26 June 1923, page 9**

#### FIRE ON NORTH-TERRACE.

The Fire Brigade received a call at about 11 p.m. on Monday to the factory of the Cameron Shoe company, a one-storey building, situated next to the Travellers' Aid Lodge on North-terrace. A wood-and-glass partition and a small quantity of boot uppers were slightly damaged. The cause of the outbreak is unknown.

**Express (Adelaide, SA : 1922 - 1923), Wednesday 18 July 1923, page 1**

#### THE RUNDLE-STREET FIRE.

A Dangerous Blaze.

Good Save by the Brigade.

The fire which occurred in Rundle-street, opposite the Arcade, late on Tuesday night, was principally destructive of the workroom of Messrs, Cope Brothers, tailors and costumiers, on the first floor of the building, but other tenants suffered as the result of a heat explosion, also from the effects of the water used to extinguish the flames. Adjoining premises endangered were those of Messrs. Mills, Rogers, & Co. (millinery and costumes), and Mr. Richard Correll, music warehouse, though in neither instance was any damage done. The showroom and stock of "Fashions," hosiery specialists, which was on the ground floor immediately beneath the fire, received a soaking by water from the hoses of the brigade, and the front windows were burst into thousands of fragments by a combustion of gases on the floor above, and in an adjoining passageway. Immediately adjacent to Cope Brothers' workroom was the Elite Hand-stitching and Button-making Depot, which showed the effects of heat and smoke. The rooms of Mrs. Williams, costumier and dressmaker, were apparently unscathed, and on the second floor, a large apartment leased to Miss Rita and Mr. Leo. Thiselton, teachers of dancing, also escaped damage.

The fire had apparently been bottled up in Cope Brothers' workroom for a long time and was unnoticed until the intense heat generated within the confined space caused an explosion, which blew the windows into the street, and the flames began licking round the window frames on the first floor. A constable on the Rundle street beat, then gave the alarm and two motor appliances under Deputy Officer Cooper, were quickly on the scene from the fire brigade headquarters. To reach the seat of the outbreak it was necessary to burst open a door giving access to the stairway from Rundle-street. The fire was raging amidst exceedingly inflammable material and the brigade effected a very fortunate save, as undoubtedly the flames, if much longer uncontrolled, must have wrought considerable havoc in a congested business centre.

In the workroom of Cope Brothers practically everything was destroyed, if not by actual contact with the flames, then as the result of tremendous heat, which scorched costumes hanging on the walls until they crumbled to cinders when touched. All the fittings were of light wood, and were readily ignited.

Mr. Clifford Cope, proprietor of the business, was absent at Broken Hill, But Mr. J. J. Humphrys, the workroom manager, stated that six hands were employed. He left the place about 4.40 p.m. and the others about 5.20. Not one of them had any idea what caused the fire. There was only a pint of benzine on the premises, and it was in a corked bottle, on all sides of which the flames appeared to have spread, yet it was found the same as when it was left. Another strange circumstance was that though cash boxes left locked came open as the result of the heat, the cheques inside them were not scorched. The loss included 54 finished suits, and four or five ladies' costumes, and about a dozen suits and three costumes which had been cut up ready for piecing together.

The building was insured with the Commercial Union Company and Messrs. Cope Brothers' plant, &c., with the Norwich Union Co.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Tuesday 24 July 1923, page 9**

A FIRE IN FLINDERS STREET.

BRIGADE MAKES A REMARKABLE SAVE.

A remarkable save was placed to the credit of the Adelaide Fire Brigade yesterday. About 6.25 p.m. a call was received to the South Australian Brush Company's premises in Flinders-street, where a fire had broken out in a stack of millet. The premises cover a large area. The brigade confined the outbreak to a small space, and only a few bundles of millet were burnt, but damage was done to a scraping machine, which removes the seed from millet, and four panes of glass were broken. The managing director of the company, Mr. W. E. Hay, stated last night that no cause could be assigned for the fire. Nothing was discovered by the brigade, either, which would show its origin. The building and contents were insured with various companies for a total of about £25,000. Mr. Hay considered, after looking at the damage, that the loss would be only a few pounds.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Wednesday 1 August 1923, page 11**

FIREMEN RARE TODAY

Adelaide Chief Talks

TWENTY-ONE STATIONS

It seems proper that Mr. J. E. Dickie should be in charge of our Fire Brigades, for he has been connected with water all his life. He sailed the wintry sea in a wind-jammer and boasted a mate's certificate before he was 18. When illness came along, and the mariner saw fit to follow the flood of opportunity, he became a fireman in the service of the London Brigade in June, 1883. A couple of years in the London Brigade had passed along evenly enough, when the colonies began to beckon. This meant another fireman for Adelaide, and Mr. Dickie has been connected with our stations practically ever since. Superintendent Salter was the proud chief in 1885, and the city had two stations—one in Light Square, where four men were available, and one at Flinders street with a roll of eight fire fighters. There were no speedy cars to hurry to the flames, and single-horse reels were used. In 1885 there were 67 calls reported. Last year the total was 403. The horse has been abandoned, and there are 30 motors ready to crank up at convenience. With the passing of the steed much of the breathless glamor of fire fighting has been lost. On the other hand, the driver of the horse was never any use at a fire, and the motorman is always on the job. "Speaking generally, our equipment is up to date," said Mr. Dickie this morning, "and we have additional plant on order. It has been interesting to watch the development of the brigade, and there are now 21 stations to be controlled. "But it is the hardest thing imaginable to recruit trainees from the

civilian ranks. We have 171 men in the force, but we are always in need of probationers. "I have to take on four men to produce one fireman. I carry no ballast, if I can help it. Not every man is suited for the work. We take suitable applicants on for three months' probation, and after they are put through a thorough training in the drill class they are rated as fourth-class firemen. A year as to be spent, assisting in the watchroom before a man is given charge there. Many grow tired of the life and get out—for it takes years of training and discipline to make an efficient man." Mr. Dickie is not one of the worrying type. What he says goes. As you step into the enquiry office you cannot but be impressed with the polished floors, the clean brasswork, the sense of neatness and system everywhere. The men go about their jobs as happily and as silently as nurses. And they're always ready. When you give an alarm you can be certain that within 35 seconds the big cars with their hoses and human freight have turned the first corner, for the works of the Brigade are well oiled. As soon as the alarm handle is turned the office has the signal, up go all the lights in the building, the three bells begin to echo a warning, the doors fly open, and the place is alive with ready men. The police are informed, and the person sending the alarm is notified at once that his alarm has been noted. Shutters fly down to tell where the fire is, the waterworks are hastened into action. All this is done in the twinkling of an eye. "I can't tell you much about things." added Mr. Dickie with a smile; "it really can't all be explained. If you want to know all about this place come along here and work with us for a week, and you'll be a wiser-man." Then he got his head down among a bundle of papers, and was forced to admit. "Time's up!" The Chief has no time to waste.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 6 August 1923, page 13**

SMALL FLARE IN GROTE STREET.

Just before midnight on Saturday the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call from the Central Market alarm. On arrival it was found that a small blaze had started among a number of cases in a room at the rear of the shop of Messrs. E. T. Fisher & Co., of Grote street. The outbreak was subdued before any material damage had been done.

**Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Wednesday 8 August 1923, page 2**

FIRE IN PULTENEY STREET.

The Fire Brigade received a call at 7 55 p.m. on Tuesday to Giles & Co.'s motor metal works at 215 Pulteney street. The brigade arrived just as the fire was getting a hold, but the flames were soon extinguished. A brazing and soldering bench was destroyed. The cause of the fire is unknown.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 14 August 1923, page 1**

CITY GAS MAIN FIRES

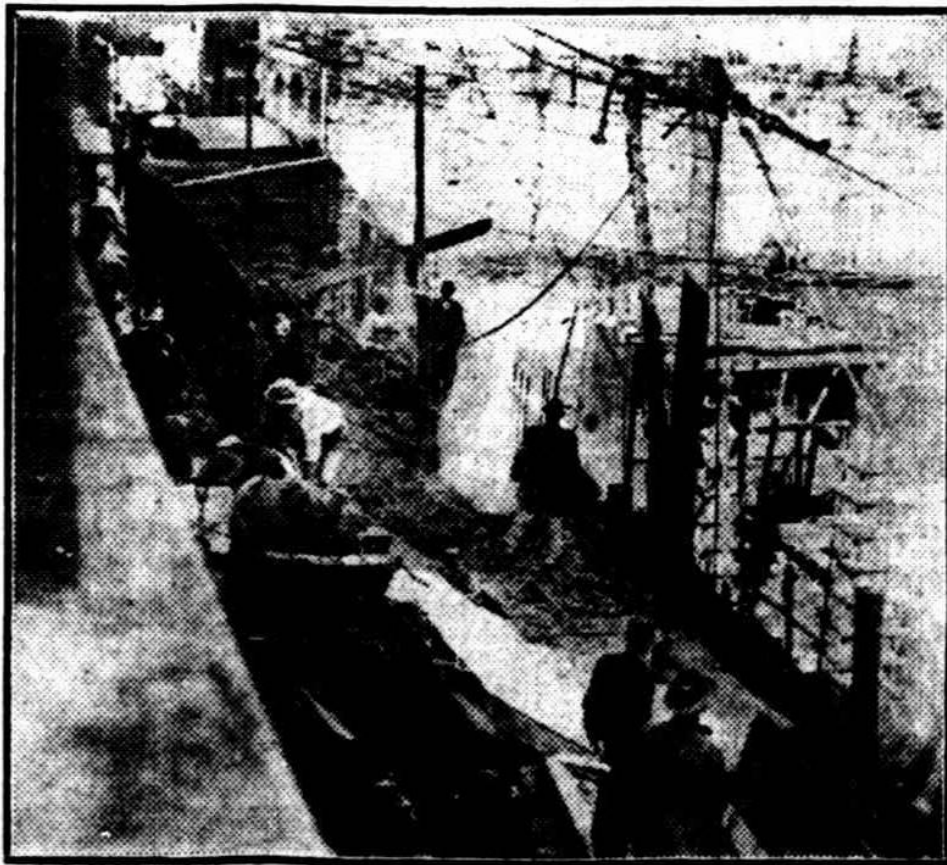
Excitement in James Place Today

FIREMEN FACED WITH DIFFICULT TASK

Without warning a gas main running through James place, alongside the spot where a fall of earth during building operations in connection with Faulding's new premises put the electric light out of action recently, broke into flames at 10 o'clock this morning. Within a few minutes two firemen with a chemical extinguisher were engaged in a hopeless task of trying to subdue the roaring flames that were leaping high into the air. The cause of the fire is unknown. Previously business people in James place had made complaint about the extensive leak that had been in existence for some time. The main where the fire broke out was exposed when portion of the roadway fell into the excavations for the new buildings being erected, and men were sent down to repair it. For a few days the odor of gas was absent, but it returned worse than ever, and for the past week business people had been afraid that a serious explosion might occur at any moment. "I don't know what caused it," said Mr. Harold Story, of Storey, Opticians, Limited, whose premises are opposite the fire. "We had been wondering when something would happen, and just before 10 o'clock this morning we noticed that it had

caught alight, and that the flames were burning 6 ft. high. "We rang the Fire Brigade and the Gas Company. A few minutes afterward two firemen were on the scene with a chemical extinguisher, but their task was hopeless. The Gas Company promised to send a man down straight away, but he did not come along until an hour afterward." "The state of James place is a disgrace," continued Mr. Storey. "The business people there have suffered a great loss since all this trouble began. For months past great teams have been drawing up in front of the shop, carting material to and from the new building. Then the roadway fell in, leaving only a few feet for the whole of the traffic to get through. "It was only a week or so ago that a team got jammed in the narrow entrance, and was there for five or six hours, while 14 horses were used in trying to get the load away. The tare of the waggon was three tons and the loading of stone was nine tons. No effort was made by the City Council to clean up the roadway, and it was not until we had rung up and complained that a man was sent down to do it. CLOSED SHOPS. "We quite realise the difficulties the contractor has had owing to the weather but we do think that he authorities should see that when a big building is being erected in a narrow laneway like this the business people's interests are protected, at least to the extent of keeping the roadway clean. Two people have already shut up their shops and moved elsewhere, owing to the inconvenience. "There are all sorts of businesses, and the damage caused to stocks will run into hundreds of pounds. This gas leak has been most obnoxious. Indeed, it has been so bad at times that it was almost impossible to stay in the building." While the flames were burning this morning a crowd soon collected, but the police kept it moving. When men from the Gas Company arrived arrangements were made for cutting and plugging the main. (A photograph of the fire will be found on another page.)

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 14 August 1923, page 11***



Gas Main on Fire in James Place.



*State Library of South Australia - An explosion in James Place, Adelaide [PRG 280/1/41/326],  
Damage caused by an explosion which occurred during excavation work in James Place,  
Adelaide. 1923. Part of Searcy Collection.*

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Friday 24 August 1923, page 6**

#### HOLIDAYS FOR TURNCOCKS

"Recreation for All":—May I ask your favor on behalf of the waterworks turn-cocks, who, I understand, are the only stationed men in and around our fair city who are on continuous duty without special leave. I am informed they are continually on duty in their district both day and night, and their only leave is 14 days annually. These men are called day and night to attend in case of breakages in mains in the streets, also by citizens in connection with leaks on their private property. They are required to attend at all fires in their districts with the firemen, to assist to shut off stopcocks and sections of water to increase the supply at a fire. As our police, fire brigade men, and others that are stationed, each have their special leave, independent of their annual, with some time off each week, I trust these men will soon enjoy the same privileges. Hindmarsh, August 24.

**Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Tuesday 28 August 1923, page 2**

"THE THIRD ALARM"

FIREMEN INDIGNANT.

The work of the Adelaide Fire Brigade is generally recognised to be arduous and nerve racking, and it will no doubt be learned with much indignation that lately false alarms have been very frequent. Matters reached a climax on Monday, when three false, and evidently malicious, alarms were received from the one place in Gray street. The firemen were roused out of their beds at 4 a.m., on Monday morning, and two motor reels were sent out to answer the summons that was received from this alarm box. At 4.15 p.m. were received. In each case the two motor reels were turned out. A heavy penalty is provided for such offenders.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 28 August 1923, page 6**

THREE FALSE ALARMS.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade reported on Monday night that it had received false alarms from Grey street, Adelaide, that day— at 4 a.m. and 4.15 and 7.35 p.m.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 29 August 1923, page 13**

FIRE IN HINDLEY STREET.

At 11.53 p.m. on Tuesday, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was summoned to a dwelling in Hindley street. A blaze had occurred in a bedroom occupied by a Chinese. Slight damage to the place resulted from the fire.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 29 August 1923, page 12**

FIRE IN A BEDROOM.

The Adelaide Fire Brigade received a call at 11.56 p.m. on Tuesday from the Morphett-street alarm. A fire had broken out in a bedroom in Hindley-street occupied by Chinese. The damage was slight.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 1 September 1923, page 4**

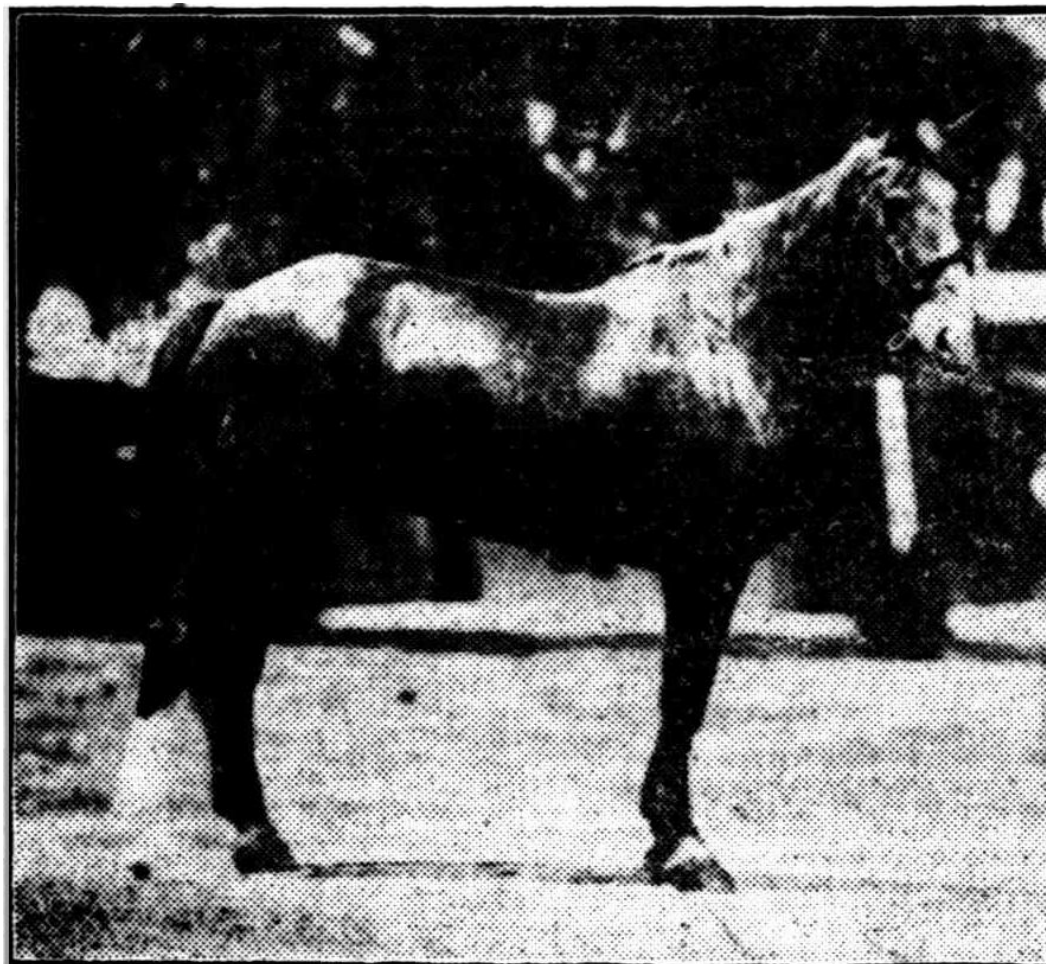
Adelaide's Oldest Horse

BARNEY WANTS TO SEE THE SHOW

Barney doesn't care a scrap. The motor may have ousted the horse, faithful Dobbin may have given way to the more, energetic internal combustion engine, but still there is one that does not heed the change.

Old Barney, a magnificent steed, full of strength and vigor, of the Adelaide Fire Brigade, celebrated his 39th birthday this month and looks well on it. Dying out in the city as horses are, old Barney is still one of the most cherished members of the brigade. Old men often put their longevity down to non-smoking or non-drinking, but Barney doesn't put it down to anything, for he is only a horse. But all the same he is a heavy eater and likes sweets as well as anything. Barney is one of the four horses that the Adelaide Fire Brigade now possesses. His long span of life has been filled with hard work. Though turned 39, few looking at him would think more than 15 years had passed him by. The magnificent old animal is a dark dapple bay with one white leg. The passing of the years has not taken away any of his youthful dash. He is as strong and willing as ever. Each day he drags the brigade's extension ladder out for practice. Originally he was a coach horse. He was one of many that belonged to the old coaches of Messrs. John Hill & Co., and many a trip Barney has made over the Clare to Auburn road. Then he took a new position on the Noarlunga route, and later came back to Adelaide to drag a doctor's brougham. From this gentlemanly existence Barney descended to be a market gardener's horse. Then came the call of the Fire Brigade, and with every ounce of spirit Barney responded. At 22 the grand old horse won a prize at the Exhibition and he looks well worthy of one now. That is what Barney would like, but Mr. R. Morris, his guardian at the Fire Brigade, only wants to show him. He has written to the show authorities requesting permission, which, if granted, will allow Barney to be on view for town and country visitors as the city's wonderful old horse. "He is a bonzer worker," said Mr. Morris

enthusiastically, "and one of the best and most affectionate horses I have ever seen. He hunted everywhere for me, once during my absence." Barney is still remembered by his friends of market days. He is known down there as well as the oldest identity, and his admirers have always a welcoming word for him. The old horse, though he cannot have many more years ahead of him, is in magnificent condition. He is a big horse with an immense chest, and his coat shines with a beautiful gloss. His teeth are as sound as ever.



BARNEY, AGED 39 YEARS.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 3 September 1923, page 12***

#### CHIMNEY ALIGHT

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade was summoned by telephone about 7 o'clock on Saturday night to premises at 188 Rundle Buildings, Rundle street, city, occupied by Mr. S. J. Harry, of Kirkcaldy road, Kirkcaldy, where a chimney had caught alight.

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Friday 7 September 1923, page 5***

#### FIRE AT G.P.O.

Shortly after 2 this afternoon the Adelaide Fire Brigade received a call to the General Post Office. The outbreak was not serious. A chimney in the correspondence branch had caught alight.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 14 September 1923, page 12***

#### A SMALL FIRE.

About 8 p.m. on Thursday the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to the Bay Road Furniture Manufactory (owned and occupied by Messrs. Walker & Martin). A quantity of shavings and sawdust was burnt. No damage resulted.

***Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Thursday 20 September 1923, page 2***

FIRE IN GAWLER PLACE.

The fire brigade received a call at 6.45 p.m. on Wednesday to the premises of Elliott Bros., motor engineers, Gawler Place, where a fire had broken out. Beyond a work bench partially destroyed there was no further damage. The cause of the fire was a piece of lighted paper coming into contact with some kerosene.

***Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Thursday 1 November 1923, page 2***

FIRE BRIGADE BILL

Mr. Edwards in the Assembly on Wednesday asked the Premier whether in view of the opposition of the Adelaide City Council, and the Fire Brigades Board, it was the intention of the Government to proceed with the amending Bill this session. The Premier said some provision was necessary to provide modern equipment.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 24 September 1923, page 6***

SUNDAY MORNING FIRE.—TWO SHOPS GUTTED.

A fire occurred shortly after 4 o'clock on Sunday morning, at the corner of Glen Osmond road and Fullarton road. The Metropolitan and Unley Fire Stations received calls, and the brigades, in charge of Station Officer Purvis (of Unley) were quickly in attendance. On arrival it was discovered that two shops, forming portion of a block of four shops and a chaff store, were well alight. The buildings, which were constructed of wood and iron, and lined with matchboard, were destroyed with the contents. The premises were owned by Mr. J. J. O'Neil, contractor, of Glen Osmond road, Fullarton Estate, and were occupied by Mr. T. Roach, fruiterer and confectioner, and Mr. W. J. O'Reily, bootmaker, respectively. The contents of an adjoining shop, rented by Mr. J. Roden, saddler, were slightly damaged by water. The shops and contents were covered by insurance. This is the second outbreak that has occurred in the same block of buildings within six months, and in each case the firemen have been able to prevent the flames from reaching the adjoining shops.

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 4 October 1923, page 1***

BARNEY WILL SAY IT

PRIDE OF THE FIRE FIGHTERS

LENT FOR FLOWER GIFT DAY

Everybody knows old Barney by repute. He is the fine old horse who has done first-class service with the Adelaide firemen for about 18 years. He was a fairly old gentleman when he entered the ranks, but he refuses to be pensioned, and would succumb if he missed a fire. These days he has to be content to lug the ladders around, but he does not complain. He is human enough to know what the firemen are thinking. Wherefore he whispered to Superintendent Dickie that he wanted a hand in Flower Day. "For so long I have been active in the interests of the unfortunate who have suffered by fire," he neighed. "and I have seen so much destruction and sorrow that I think it is up to me to rush about for once on behalf of the sick. I've never had a chance of helping in this way before, so please may I go out in the firecart for portion of that day and help carry the gifts to the patients?" Then Mr. Dickie rubbed the old chap's nose, and told him that he certainly could go out on active service on October 11, but he would send one of his pals along to give him a hand, too. So the active aid of the Fire Brigade has been enlisted, and there will be a big-hearted fireman proud to point the way to his charitably disposed steeds. Long life to old Barney!



"BARNEY" AND HIS BEST FRIEND

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 4 October 1923, page 8***

A NEW FIRE EXTINGUISHER.

OF INTEREST TO BUSINESS MEN.

This afternoon at 3 p.m., in the Willard Hall, Wakefield street, a lecture will be given on the advantages of "Firefoam" as a fire-fighting medium. A demonstration will take place immediately after at the rear of the hall with fires of oil and films, which will be considerably larger than the usual fires employed in demonstrations of this sort. It is claimed for this extinguisher that it is not only a first-aid appliance, but can be installed as a scientific fire-fighter throughout a building by means of sprinklers or revolvable reels, or both; it is more effective than water, and does no damage to any material or substance it covers. Practically all the oil fields and storage tanks throughout the world are now protected by this means, and all oil-burning ships. Several fire brigades in England use a large tank containing the chemical mounted on a motor chassis, and have been very successful with it. The Vacuum Oil Company in Sydney has recently put in a complete installation, and many large business houses are showing an increasing interest in its use. So it will be seen that the idea is not one to be lightly regarded, and may easily prove itself to be one of very great public benefit. The distributors, Messrs. Lyall, Downer & Company, Limited, would be very pleased if any one interested, apart from those already invited, would attend their lectures and demonstration.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 8 October 1923, page 12***

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS.

A CABLE FUSES.

A short circuit caused the travelling cable in the lift at the Blue Bird cafe Linde's-lane, off Rundle-street to fuse and catch fire early on Saturday morning. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade

SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit  
[www.fire-brigade.asn.au](http://www.fire-brigade.asn.au)  
25 April 2026

was called at 3.36. The only damage done was to the lift wiring, which will render the lift useless for some time.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 13 October 1923, page 8**

#### CITY FIRES

In response to an alarm at 7.15 this evening from Messrs. Reid Bros.' premises in Flinders street, the city fire brigade attended to an outbreak at the Australian Paper Mills factory in Ifould street. A large rubbish bin was found to be alight, and was quickly extinguished.

At 7.30, in answer to a telephone call, the brigade was dispatched to another outbreak, at Messrs. Horwood & Co., engineers, of Waymouth street. On arrival it was discovered that portion of the store was ablaze. The outbreak was subdued within a few minutes. Only slight damage was caused. The origin of the fire is unknown.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 24 October 1923, page 9**

#### FIRE AT ALLANS' BULK STORE.

#### SMART SAVE BY THE BRIGADE.

A remarkable escape from a serious fire at Allans' bulk store for pianos in Franklin-street, Adelaide was due to the promptitude of the fire brigade last night. A call to the factory was received at 8.25, and the brigade found a blaze at the centre of the store. There was a prospect for a few minutes of about £45,000 worth of property being destroyed, but getting smartly to work the firemen extinguished the fire before they had done much more than damage a Ford motor lorry. It was surmised that the fire was due to the overheating of a part of the engine of the lorry. The store was full of inflammable material, cases of pianos being stacked three tiers high, and several cases of petrol were just above the lorry.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Wednesday 24 October 1923, page 5**

#### FIRE IN CITY

#### Artist's Studio Destroyed

Timely discovery by the caretaker and the prompt attendance of the Fire Brigade prevented a big fire on the top floor of the Exchange Buildings, Pirie street, soon after 9 o'clock this morning. A fire started in one of two rooms occupied by Miss B. Francis as an artist's studio. Many valuable designs and pictures were destroyed, together with woodwork and hand-painted ornaments. Early discovery enabled the firemen to put the fire out with chemicals. The contents of the studio are insured for £100 with the I.O.A. Insurance Company, and the buildings with the Royal Insurance Company.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 30 October 1923, page 7**

#### SMALL FIRE AT BIRKS'

On the premises of Charles Birks and Co., Ltd., Rundle street, a small fire broke out early this afternoon. The Metropolitan Brigade received a call at 1.15 p.m., and found that some packing boxes in the basement had caught alight. Members of the staff had already brought the company's hose to play, and the fire was promptly extinguished. Only little damage was done.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 31 October 1923, page 12**

#### FIRE IN RUNDLE STREET.

On Tuesday afternoon the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to the basement of Messrs. Charles Birks & Co., drapers, in Rundle street, Adelaide. A number of empty cardboard boxes had become ignited. The staff in the basement applied the chemical

contents from automatic extinguishers, and when the Brigade arrived the danger was over. The origin of the fire is unknown.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 3 November 1923, page 9**

#### NEW FIRE ESCAPE

For Adelaide Station

Messrs. Merryweather & Sons, Ltd., of Greenwich road, London, shipped to Adelaide last month one of their latest up-to-date pieces of fire fighting mechanism, in the shape of a motor driven turntable fire ladder, which commands a total height of 90 ft. A unique feature of this appliance is that the entire working of the ladders and the propulsion of the vehicle are performed by one engine— a 65 h.p. petrol motor. The ladders can be raised extended, and slewed simultaneously, and one man, by the manipulation of three levers, has entire control of operations. In addition to life-saving work the ladder can be used as a water tower for directing fire fighting streams into the upper floors of buildings, without being dependent on any other structure for support. The ladders, which are expected to arrive shortly, will be used by the City Fire Station.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 5 November 1923, page 9**

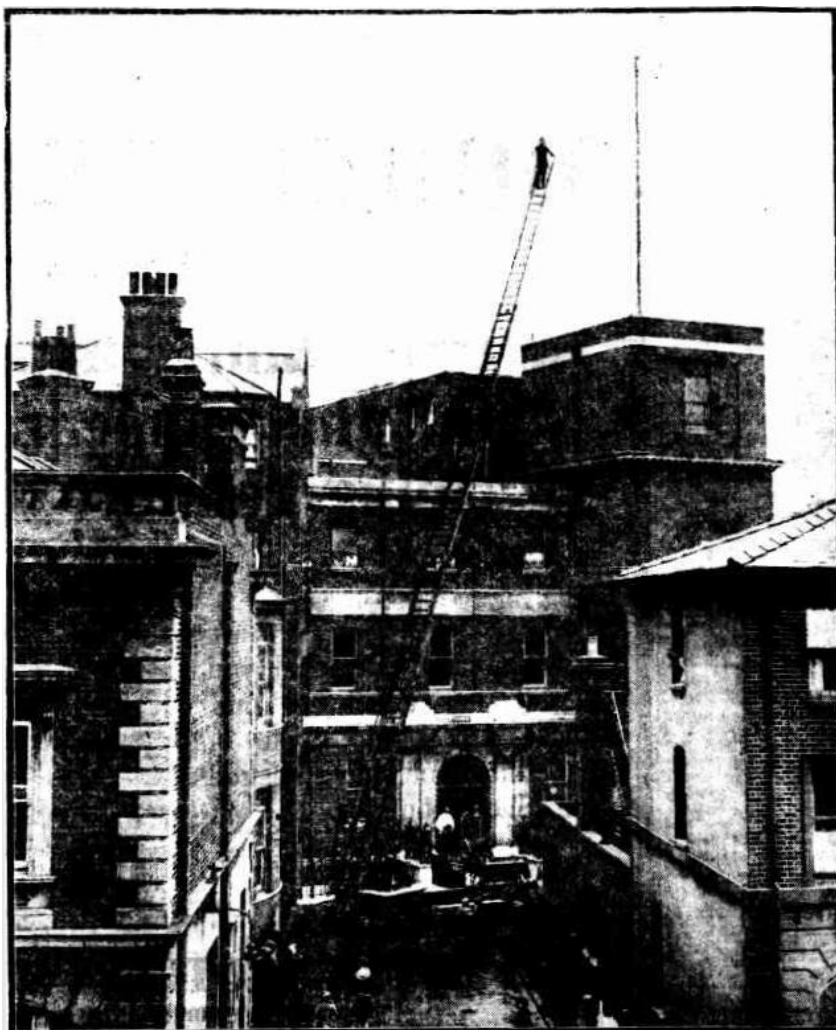
#### FIRE BRIGADE APPLIANCES.

##### A NEW LADDER.

A motor-driven turntable fire ladder of the latest design, commanding a total height of 90 feet, is expected shortly by the Metropolitan Fire Station. The makers are Messrs. Merryweather & Sons, London. A feature of this appliance is that the entire working of the ladders and the propulsion of the vehicle is performed by one engine, viz., a 65 h.p. petrol motor. The ladders can be raised, extended, and slewed simultaneously, and one man by the manipulation of three levers has entire control of the operations. In addition to life-saving work, the ladder can be used as a water tower for directing streams into the upper floors of buildings without being dependent on any other structure for support. Other fire-fighting machinery in order by the Adelaide Fire Brigade includes three motor pumps, made by Dennis Brothers, London.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 19 November 1923, page 10**

#### ADELAIDE'S NEW FIRE ESCAPE LADDER.



Messrs. Merryweather & Sons, Greenwich, have constructed one of their latest pattern Motor Turntable Fire Ladders for the Adelaide Fire Brigade. The photograph shows this machine undergoing tests outside the Miller Hospital, Greenwich, with ladders extended to a height of about 85 feet. The entire working of the escape—which will reach as high as 90 feet—and the propulsion of the vehicle are carried out by a 65-h.p. petrol motor. The ladders can be raised, extended, and slewed simultaneously, and one man, by the manipulation of three levers, has entire control of the above operations. The ladder is the last word in fire escape construction, and has been adopted by many cities throughout the world. It will be available for use in Adelaide in a few weeks.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 1 December 1923, page 13***

#### FIRE IN ADELAIDE.

On Friday evening the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to the premises of the Modern Art Display Service of Leigh Chambers, Leigh street, City. A couple of reels were dispatched to the scene, but the flames had secured such a hold that the two rooms concerned were gutted. On the arrival of the brigade, Newton, McLaren, Limited, whose premises are opposite those in which the fire occurred, switched the electric lights outside their warehouse, and thus aided the work of the firefighters considerably. The fire affected building was insured with the North British & Mercantile Insurance Company, Limited. The loss sustained has not yet been estimated.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 1 December 1923, page 17***

#### FIRE IN LEIGH-STREET.

SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit  
[www.fire-brigade.asn.au](http://www.fire-brigade.asn.au)  
25 April 2026

Prompt action by the fire brigade, who were aided in their operations by Messrs. Newton and MacLaren, who switched on their electric lights, prevented an outbreak of fire from spreading beyond the rooms of the Modern Art Display Service, in Leigh chambers. Leigh-street, on Friday evening. The rooms are upstairs in the rear of the premises, a part of which is the property of the Church Office, which is situated on the other side of the lane. The fire was dangerously close to the packing room of Hooper's Furniture Emporium, in which was stored much material of all inflammable nature. The cause of the fire is unknown. Damage was done to two rooms and offices. The contents of which were destroyed. The contents were insured with the British Insurance Company. The Church Office floor was flooded with water, and a few pictures were spoiled.

***Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Monday 10 December 1923, page 2***

#### FIRE IN PARK LANDS

#### TWO ACRES OF GRASS BURNT

The Adelaide Fire Brigade received a call at 8.35 on Saturday evening to the effect that a fire had occurred at the rear of the Adelaide Oval. It was ascertained that it was a grass fire in the park lands at the rear of the Oval. The fire was promptly extinguished by the brigade. Approximately two acres of grass were burnt.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 10 December 1923, page 9***

#### A ROOF DAMAGED.

The brief windstorm on Saturday night lifted two sheets of iron from the roof of Holden's motor body works, King William-street south. One of the fire sprinklers was damaged, and this set the fire alarm working. The Fire Brigade was quickly on the spot, but no damage was done, and the sprinkler and roof were soon repaired.

***Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Wednesday 12 December 1923, page 3***

#### FIRE AT G.P.O.

A sensation was caused at the General Post Office on Tuesday evening at about 9 o'clock when smoke was seen issuing from the basement, which is used as a porter's room. The alarm was given and the brigade and a large crowd were on the spot. It was a difficult matter to locate the fire owing to the density of the smoke, but after two firemen had been rendered unconscious by the smoke, it was found that the electric wires had fused. A few discarded uniforms were burnt, but otherwise there was no further damage.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 22 December 1923, page 9***

#### FIRE!

#### THE YEAR'S RAVAGES.

#### Brigade Splendidly Equipped.

A good friend but a bad enemy! This is the fire fiend. Like time and tide, he waits for no man. He is even more relentless, for his blow is unexpected and treacherous. Then, when the blazing peril is striking terror into heart and brain, do we turn with devout thankfulness to the men who are always ready at a moment's notice to risk their lives, not only for others, but for property as well. Do we always think of the fireman in his true light — give him credit for being the unsung hero that he has proved himself to be? Like fire itself, he is ever waiting, unseen and unheard, but able to spring to activity in an instant. There is no welcome long break at the end of every week for the man who lives by fighting the flames. Christmas Days and public holidays are not occasions when he can lay care aside, and, if he chooses, think only of himself. His duty is public service. Without hope of praise, and with every prospect of personal injury, he must hold himself in readiness for a call to grips with his fearful enemy.

### The Year's Record.

Such is the life of the members of the fire brigades of South Australia, and of whom Chief Officer J. E. Dickie is so justly proud. Already this year 400 calls have been answered by firemen in different parts of the State. Some of these were false alarms. Others were to conflagrations of little account. Still others — and among these the destruction of Duncan and Fraser's motor works stands out as the worst fire in the history of the State — were serious outbreaks which tested the endurance, experience, and ingenuity of the firemen to the utmost. Many thousands of pounds' worth of property has been saved — many lives have possibly been saved. Sometimes the fire fiend has won — but very seldom, and only when he had Time as an ally. Your fireman counts Time as a most important factor in his life. If Time is on his side, all is well. If not, his task is greatly increased. A quick notification of an outbreak is of incalculable value. It means the speedy arrival of the brigade, and the tackling of the menace while it is yet in its infancy, and therefore less formidable.

### An Average Year.

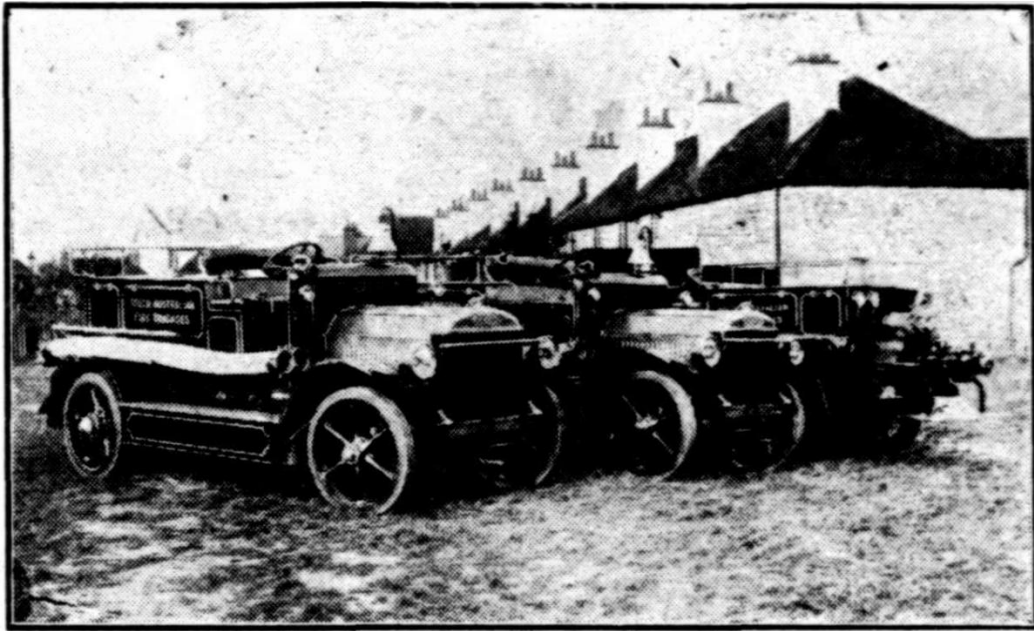
In the city area, particularly its heart, there is no more room for outward extension of commercial premises. Progress demands increased accommodation, and the structures grow upwards. The almost daily additions to the height of buildings is naturally rendering the work of the fire brigade more difficult, but this is in some measure counterbalanced by the improvements in architecture, both from the point of view of firefighting and the easy escape of the occupants in an emergency. Reinforced concrete is also playing its part in assisting the brigade. Further, it is evident that business heads are learning the lesson of demolished warehouses, factories, and shops, for more and more of them are equipping their premises — particularly drygoods warehouses — with automatic water sprinklers, which, installed in the ceiling, begin to operate when heat is generated, and at the same time sound an alarm at the brigade headquarters. It was only this device which saved the major portion of the Farmers' Union block at Duncan & Fraser's fire. The Building Act which was recently passed will also have a most beneficial effect so far as the work of the brigade is concerned. Adelaide compares very favourably with any of the other States in every way — as regards precautions by business men and the public generally, the architecture of buildings and fire escapes provided, and the equipment of the brigade.

### A Happy Fire Chief.

About 12 months ago The Register gave considerable prominence to the inadequacy of our firefighting appliances in view of the rapid growth and development of the city and outlying districts. During the year the Fire Brigades Board decided to borrow £25,000, and a new motor turntable, with 93 ft. automatically operated ladder (£3,400), and three new motor appliances, equipped with powerful pumping plant (£1,770 each), were ordered. The turntable ladder machine, arrived from England recently, and has been on duty about a week. It ranks with the most up-to-date apparatus of its kind in the world. The other three motors were landed only on Thursday, and will be placed on duty so soon as their trials are completed. This greatly reinforces the Adelaide plant, and the chief officer is happy in the thought that he now has a brigade equal to any task. "I am well satisfied," he said to The Register's representative on Friday. "The efficiency of the brigade appliances will last my time. The remainder of the £23,000 is to be spent on a new firefloat for Port Adelaide. All the suburban stations are now well equipped, and they are backed up in an emergency by the head-station." Mr. Dickie has been a fireman for 40 ears, having joined the service in London in 1883, and arrived in Adelaide two years later. The Brigade Staff. The brigade staff has been slightly in-creased since last year, and now comprises 170 men of all ranks. These include 105 permanent, 39 on theatre duty, and 27 auxiliary firemen. Auxiliaries are partially paid men in certain country districts where the employment of a permanent force is not warranted. The duties of the brigade have been added to, as during the year it has taken over the control and periodical inspection of fire extinguishers in all Commonwealth Government buildings.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 22 December 1923, page 9**

ADELAIDE'S FIRE-FIGHTING MOTOR PUMPS.



Three new motor fire pump appliances arrived in Adelaide from London on Thursday to augment the efficiency of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 26 December 1923, page 11***

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS.

FIRE AT THE CONVENT OF MERCY.

The Fire Brigade was called to the Convent of Mercy, Angas-street about 9.30 a.m. on Monday. A wire had fused between the ceiling and floor of the second storey. It was difficult to reach the seat of the flames, but they were extinguished within 15 minutes, after slight damage had been done to one room.