

## Adelaide Fire Brigade 1924

***Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 5 January 1924, page 1***

### FIRE AT KENT TOWN

#### Hairdresser Loses Stock

Most of the stock and fittings in the saloon of Mr. W. R. Reeve, hairdresser, of North terrace, Kent Town, was destroyed by fire early this morning. From marks on the front door the opinion was formed that thieves forced an entrance and that they were responsible for the fire. The place has been entered four times in the last five months. The noise of glass as it smashed on the ground aroused the occupants of the Royal Hotel, which is next door. The Adelaide Fire Brigade quickly responded to the call. The firemen effected a fairly good save. The building, which is insured with the Australian Alliance Insurance Company for £100, is the property of Mr. Robert Sinclair, Payneham road, Stepney. The stock was insured for £150 with the Ocean Insurance Company.

***Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 5 January 1924, page 26***

### FORD TRUCKS.

Harris, Scarfe, Limited, one of the best known commercial houses in Australia ordered 12 one-ton Ford trucks, and the S.A. Fire Brigade's Board have ten Ford one-ton trucks in their service. A test under the supervision of Government officials showed that the Ford ton truck, fully loaded, averaged 22.8 miles to the gallon. The truck is right in design and material.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 7 January 1924, page 9***

### A FIRE ENGINE BOGGED.

One of the big motor fire-engines attached to the Adelaide station became bogged in soft soil in the West Park Lands on Sunday afternoon. The engine had been dispatched to extinguish a grass fire at the rear of the Roman Catholic Cemetery. When an attempt was made to go back to the Wakefield-street depot it was found that the wheels had sunk deeply into the ground. It was over 3½ hours before the engine was moved out of its resting place.

***Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924), Monday 7 January 1924, page 2***

### FIRE AT TOBACCONISTS

At 1.30 a.m. on Saturday a fire occurred in a tobacconist's shop owned by Mr. W. R. Reeves, and situated on North terrace, Kent Town. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade effected a great save. Little damage resulted, as the fire was confined to the front portion of the shop.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 7 January 1924, page 6***

### FIRE AT KENT TOWN.

Early on Saturday morning a fire broke out in the saloon of Mr. Reeve's hair-dressing premises at Belgrave terrace, Kent Town. The bulk of the stock and fittings was destroyed. The cause of the fire is unknown. The Adelaide Fire Brigade was quickly on the scene, but much damage had been done before the flames could be controlled. The building is insured with the Australian Alliance Insurance Company for £100, and belongs to Mr. Robert Sinclair, of Payneham road, Stepney. The stock in the shop was covered to the extent of £150 with the Ocean Insurance Company.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 10 January 1924, page 6***

### A CITY FIRE.

It was reported on Wednesday night that stock valued at £25 belonging to Mr. Josiah Cox, bootmaker, of Gilles street, was destroyed in a fire at his shop about 8 o'clock. The Fire Brigade confined the flames to a small area. The building was little damaged.

***Saturday Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1929), Saturday 12 January 1924, page 13***

FIRE IN RUNDLE STREET.

On Friday evening, when the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was summoned to the premises of Mr. C. Segar, general dealer, 208 Rundle street, a fire had broken out in a furniture showroom. After 10 minutes strenuous fighting, the brigade subdued the flames, but the building and contents had been severely damaged by fire and water. No estimate of the loss was available. The premises and contents were insured with the Western Assurance Company.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 12 January 1924, page 45***

THIEVES AT KENT TOWN.

HAIRDRESSER'S SHOP SET ON FIRE.

In the last five months the hairdressing and tobacconist establishment of Mr. W. R. Reeve, of North-terrace, Kent Town, has been entered by thieves on five occasions. The last time was early on Saturday morning, and the intruders set fire to the premises, and most of the stock and fittings were destroyed. The Royal Hotel is situated next door, and the occupants were aroused by the noise of the glass windows as they cracked with the heat and smashed on the ground. The alarm was immediately given the Adelaide Fire Brigade, which effected a good save. The opinion that thieves had been responsible was formed by the police from marks on the door, made apparently by a jemmy. The building is the property of Mr. Robert Sinclair, of Payneham-road, St. Peters, and was insured for £100 in the Australian Alliance Insurance Company. The stock was insured for £150 with the Ocean Insurance Company.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 16 January 1924, page 12***

A FIRE IN HUTT-STREET.

At 11.35 p.m. on Tuesday the fire brigade received a call to the Summergreene Dye Works, in Hutt-street, owned by Messrs. Garrett & George. The front portion of the shop was slightly damaged.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 21 January 1924, page 9***

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON BLAZE.

BRUSH COMPANY'S FACTORY GUTTED.

FINE WORK BY THE FIRE BRIGADE.

DAMAGE RUNS INTO MANY THOUSANDS OF POUNDS.

A fire involving many thousands of pounds' damage occurred at the South Australian Brush Company's factory, in Flinders-street, early on Sunday afternoon. Some adjacent buildings were also damaged by fire, water, and falling debris.

Large volumes of smoke and flame were seen in the suburbs, and crowds flocked to the scene of the conflagration. The cause of the outbreak is a mystery. The main building measured 100 feet by 200 feet, and the fire soon spread over the entire area. Splendid work was done by the brigade.

About 12.30 on Sunday afternoon huge volumes of black smoke, intermingled with tongues of flame, were seen rising from a block of buildings stretching from Flinders-street to Ifould-street in one direction and located about midway between Pulteney-street and Ackland-street in the other. A crowd soon congregated, especially in Flinders-street. The fire brigade found

the South Australian Brush Company's factory in flames. The structure was a light one, a large portion being of galvanized iron. Adjoining premises were, in some instances, also of an inflammable character. Mr. E. C. Butler's tinsmith's shop, for instance, being for the most part galvanised iron and wood, and, like the brush factory, it was reduced to ruins. Materials used in the brush factory, which include resin and other highly inflammable goods, in addition to stocks of timber, fed the flames so readily that it was a question of minutes only before over a considerable area there was one burning mass. Rafters and iron fell in such rapid succession that the firemen had several narrow escapes from serious injury. A number of minor bruises, cuts by falling iron, and burns were sustained, but the men worked on with the pluck which always characterises fire-fighters. In less than half an hour from the outbreak the whole scene, from whatever direction it was approached, presented an aspect of desolation. Heaps of blackened and twisted iron, portions of charred beams, piles of burnt timber surrounded by scorched hair which, in the ordinary course of things, would have been converted into brushes within the next few days, and pools of water covered the area where, shortly before, factories had stood. The energy with which the firemen faced their task won the admiration of spectators, who, however, were kept at a safe distance from the actual scene of the fire by a body of police. It was apparent that the efforts of the fire fighters were being centred on the task of confining the flames within the area already devastated. From all sides streams of water were being directed to the burning materials, and it is to the credit of the brigade that the damage was not far more extensive. The collapse of a wall at the south-west corner of the brush factory was responsible for damage to the premises of Messrs. T. A. James & Co., immediately adjoining. A portion of the roof and galvanized wall were torn away, and other similar damage was occasioned by falling debris in other directions. Some splendid "saves," however, were effected, two cottages in Flinders-street and the premises of Messrs. Whillias & Ormiston, printers, being notable instances of the success of the efforts of the brigade in their attempts to confine the conflagration within its original bounds.

Statement by the Company's Manager.

Mr. W. E. Hay, manager and a director of the South Australian Brush Company, stated on Sunday afternoon that the first intimation of the fire he received was while visiting a patient at Miss Laurence's private hospital, which is situated in Wakefield-street near the factory. One of the nurses in the hospital remarked that there was smoke at the back. He looked out and saw that the brush factory was ablaze. A minute later it appeared as if the whole place was alight, so rapidly did the fire spread. The flames at first appeared to issue from about the centre of the factory. The frontage to Ifould-street was about 200 ft., and the depth about 100 ft. That portion of the building was entirely swept. Fortunately the warehouse received comparatively slight damage. The firemen kept the flames in check and effected a splendid save so far as this portion of the premises was concerned. It was fortunate that the fire was prevented from getting a thorough hold of the warehouse and basement under it, for Mr. Hay remarked that there were large quantities of raw materials stored there, all of which were saved. Questioned concerning the future operations of the company, Mr. Hay said he hoped they would be able to make some sort of a start at work again in a few days. They employed 130 workmen, and several of them would be able to continue work at once. There would be much to do in clearing away the debris. In reply to another question, Mr. Hay said it was impossible at that stage to make even a rough estimate of the amount of damage. The stock and plant were insured in the Alliance Insurance Company for £25,000. This did not include the buildings. Between 80 and 90 machines for different purposes, which were in the factory, were worth £15,000. Whether or not all these were completely destroyed he could not say. Mr. Hay explained that he was a large shareholder in the company, which was a semi-public one. His co-director (Mr. H. A. Moore) was at present on his way to England, where he intended to purchase more machinery. To a suggestion that the materials used in the manufacture of brushware were of an inflammable nature, Mr. Hay assented. "Just about as inflammable as a box of matches," he said. He mentioned that a large quantity of the timber stacked on the premises had been saved, about half of it having been stored away from the main stack in the eastern part of the building. The engine-room was constructed of reinforced concrete, and the

engine and gas-producer, which were worth £5,000, were practically intact. Mr. Hay was not able to throw any light on the origin of the fire. He remarked that it was one of those problems to which there seemed to be no solution. No work had been done in the factory since Friday afternoon. The night watchman (Mr. Niehuus) had been on duty on Friday and Saturday nights, and the premises were all right when he left at 6 a.m. on Sunday. No work was done at the factory on Saturdays.

#### Mr. Butler Interviewed.

Mr. Butler stated that the premises in which he carried on his business as a tinsmith, and which were totally destroyed, belonged to the Brush Company. He had about £200 worth of stock, in addition to plant and machinery. The fire had entirely swept the place, and all the stock was apparently destroyed, and the plant was damaged. His stock and plant were insured in the New Zealand Company for £200. He estimated the damage, apart from the premises, at about £300.

#### Chief Officer's Statement.

Mr. J. E. Dickie, Chief Officer of the fire brigade, stated that the Metropoli-tan Brigade received a call from the Flinders-street alarm at 12:27 p.m. A call was received at the Unley station six minutes later, from the Unley Post-office alarm. Without loss of time the city brigade arrived on the scene, and found that the building was well alight. A little later a motor hose carriage arrived from Unley. Nine lines of hose were speedily at work from all four sides. It was realised that the only thing to be done was to play all the available water from each side of the building. Mains were tapped in Flinders, Wakefield, Ackland and Ifould streets. The flames already had hold of a large area. The fire was well under control in 30 minutes. A good deal of attention was directed to the work of pre-venting the flames spreading to other properties. Messrs. Whilas & Ormiston's printing works, on the east, along the Flinders-street frontage, escaped, but in addition to the Brush Company's buildinn, Messrs. Hitchcox Brothers, brass foun-ders; Mr. Schubert, a monumental mason; Mr. E. C. Butler, tinsmith; and Messrs. T. A. James & Company, furniture manu-facturers, all had their premises damaged to some extent. Two motor hose car-riages, two motor fire engines, and one salvage van were kept at work for some time. The Dennis motor fire pump was operated from Flinders-street. Owing to the collapse of portions of the buildings, which were of a light charac-ter, and included galvanised iron and wood structures, several firemen sustained nasty cuts and burns about the hands and arms and legs.

#### The Police Arrangements.

The police arrangements were admirable. Inspectors McGrath and Nation were in charge, and there were 15 foot constables and six mounted police on the scene. Crowds of spectators assembled, but they were not allowed near the scene of the fire.



Pulteney st	
145-147	Excell, W. A., motor spring maker
149	Lawrance, Mrs M. J.
151	Von Alten, Mrs Louise
153	Tedmanson, Mrs Annie
155	Hanson, J. T, mtr drvr
159	Allen, Mrs A.
161	James, T. A. & Co Ltd, wickerworker and perambulator manufacturer
167	S.A. Brush Co Ltd—Hay, W. E, managing director
171	Mitchelson, C, cool drinks and confectionery
175	Hitchcock Bros, brssfndrs and foundry
179	Butler, E. C, irnmngr and tinsmith
	Schubert & Son, mntl msns
181	McClure, Mrs A. C.

*Flinders Street, from the Sands and McDougall's directory for 1924.*

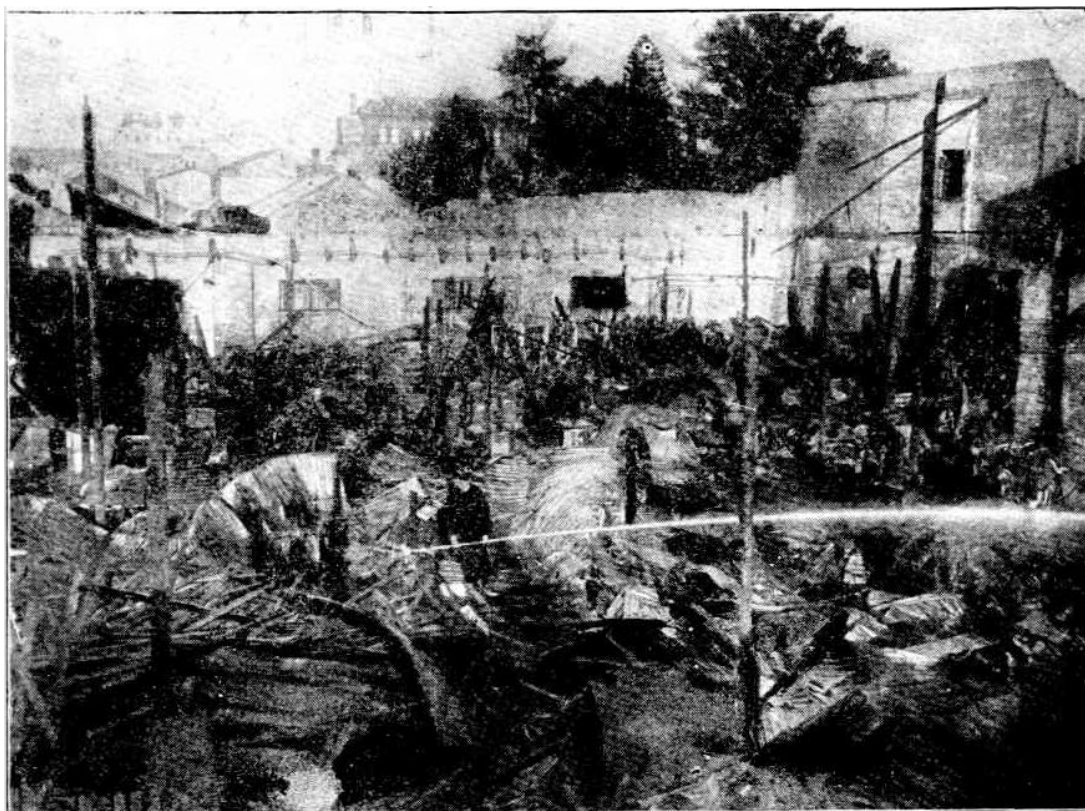
*News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Monday 21 January 1924, page 1*



VIEW OF RUINS AFTER YESTERDAY'S FIRE HAD GUTTED THE FACTORY OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRUSH COMPANY.

*Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 22 January 1924, page 8*

AFTER THE FIRE AT S.A. BRUSH COMPANY'S PREMISES



Although the above photograph, taken from Ifould street, shows all that remains of the rear portion of the premises of the S.A. Brush Company, which was the scene of a fire on Sunday afternoon, the manager (Mr. W. E. Hay) states that he will not have to "put off" any of the employes on account of the loss of plant. The front portion of the factory was not affected, and the adjoining buildings, which are also owned by the company, will be used to carry on the work until the damage in the main structure has been made good. The success of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in saving the premises of Messrs. Whillas & Ormiston, printers, on the right (outside the picture), was especially noteworthy, as the fire swept to a pile of timber stacked against the wall of that building. The photo, gives some idea of the extent of the

damage sustained by the Brush Company, but it is impossible yet to estimate the real loss.  
The stock and plant was insured for £25,000.

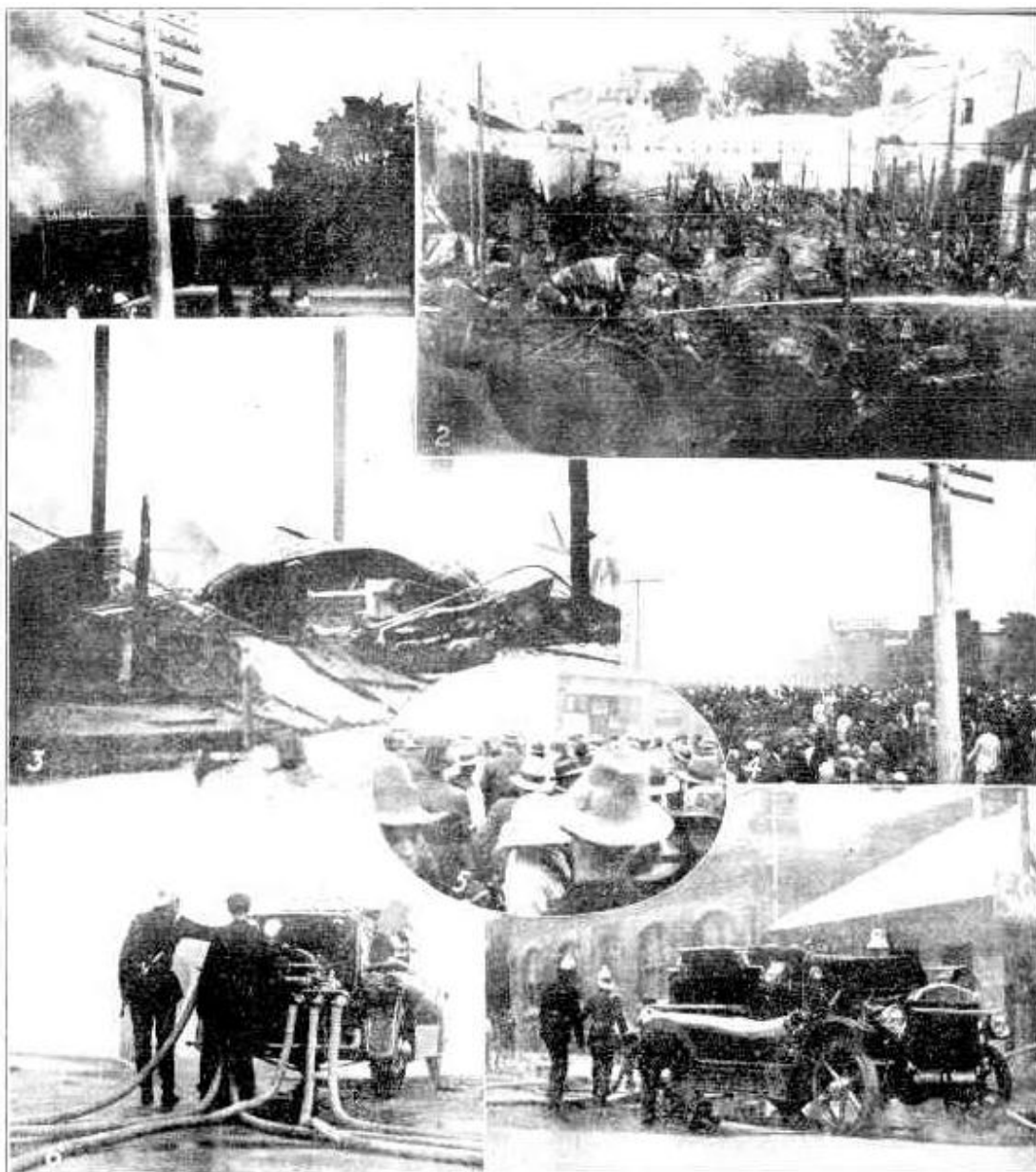
***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Tuesday 22 January 1924, page 13***

DANGEROUS WOODEN STRUCTURES.

Mr J. E. Dickie, superintendent of the Adelaide Fire Brigade, speaking on Monday of the fire which gutted the premises of the South Australian Brush Company in Flinders-street on Sunday afternoon, said wood and iron buildings of that description, and there were several of them in the city, were a menace to adjoining buildings. When one caught alight the others soon followed. The flames quickly ran up the wood of the walls to the roof, and burning the supports through, that part of the building collapsed on to the merchandise beneath, and in a few seconds the whole building was a mass of flames. It was almost an impossibility to put such a fire out before the whole premises had been gutted. When a wood and iron structure was burning it was bound to collapse.

***Observer (Adelaide, SA : 1905 - 1931), Saturday 26 January 1924, page 31***

THE SUNDAY FIRE AT THE BRUSH COMPANY'S PREMISES IN FLINDERS STREET.



A sensation was caused in Adelaide last Sunday afternoon by an outbreak of fire in a nest of business premises in Flinders street. As a result the factory belonging to the S.A. Brush Company was destroyed, and the adjoining buildings were damaged. No estimate of the damage done to the plant and stock of the British Company has been given, but the insurance is represented by £25,000. Our composite shows:— 1. The early stages of the fire with dense columns of smoke spreading over the city. 2. The scene of devastation the following morning. Firemen still hosing the smouldering ruins. 3. Some idea of the accumulated debris. 4. and 5. Sections of the large crowd, which gathered, notwithstanding that no tramways were available. 6 and 7. The fire brigade which made a splendid save, used the new Dennis motor fire pump for the first time. Three lines of hose were operated with great effect.

Photos—2, 6, 7, Smith. 1, 4, 5, B. Spencer. 8, Payne.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 2 February 1924, page 4**

#### FIRE IN RUNDLE STREET

At 4 o'clock this afternoon the City Fire Station received a call to an outbreak of fire at Messrs. Barlow Bros.' footwear shop, near the Beehive Corner, in Rundle street, where rebuilding

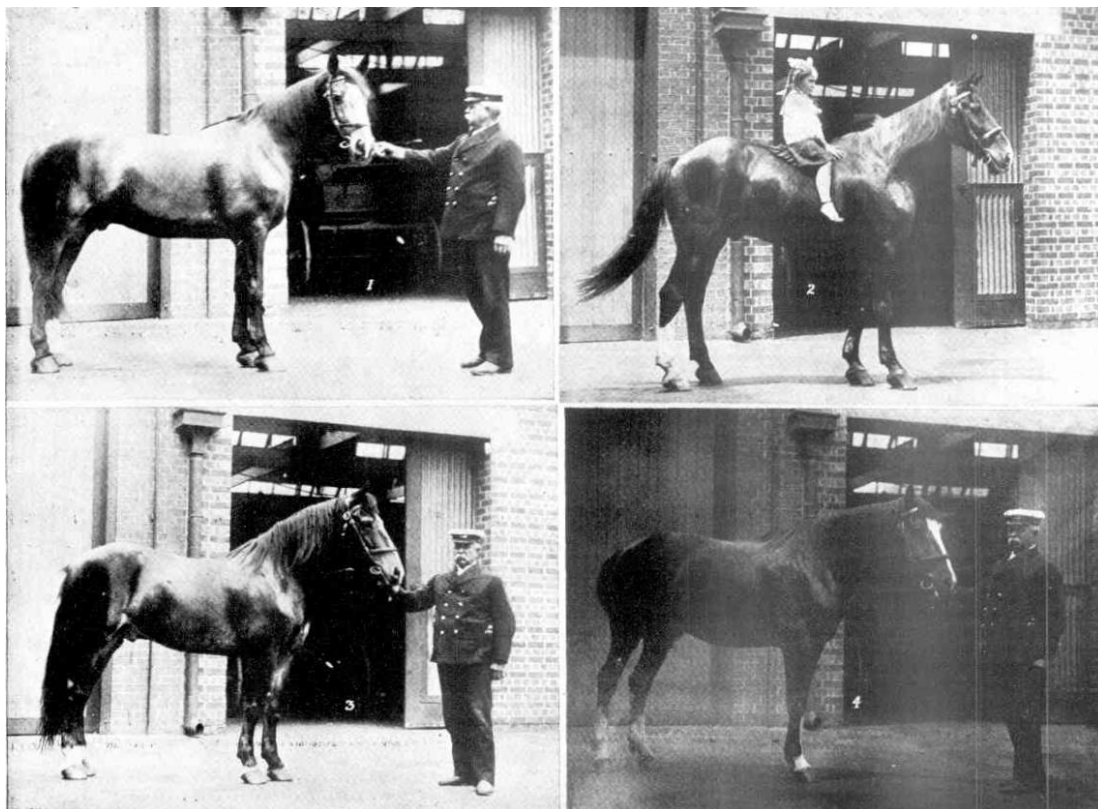
SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit  
[www.fire-brigade.asn.au](http://www.fire-brigade.asn.au)  
25 April 2026

operations are in progress. The brigade promptly extinguished the flames. Damage was done to the woodwork in the basement and a stairway. The origin of the outbreak is unknown.

**Critic (Adelaide, SA : 1897-1924), Wednesday 6 February 1924, page 12**

#### FAVORITES AT THE ADELAIDE FIRE BRIGADE STATION

ALL HORSES, EXCEPT BARNEY, WILL BE SOLD TO-DAY (WEDNESDAY)



(1) Tiger, bay gelding, aged horse, has been in the service of the Fire Brigade about 5 years.

(2) Barney, aged 39 years, dapper bay, has seen 20 years' service in the Fire Brigade. Barney is the hero of the Station, and has done all manners of work. Prior to entering the Brigade he has been in the service of doctors, etc. Barney is not to be sold, but will still continue the good work for the Brigade, such as drawing the big ladder. (3) Dandy, a very handsome aged bay horse, good anywhere, and a great favorite with all hands. Dandy is useful at any kind of work. (4) Jim, a very handsome dark brown horse, six years old, has been doing general work.

Dick, "Critic" Photos]

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 9 February 1924, page 8**

#### FIRE IN A CEILING.

Slight damage was caused to the ceiling of a house at 23 Princess street, Adelaide, occupied by Mr. Harry Kinnane, labourer, and owned by Mrs. Weeman, of Percy street, West Croydon, on Friday at about 9 a.m., by fire escaping from a chimney fire which passes through it. The Fire Brigade attended and extinguished the flames.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 11 February 1924, page 6**

#### A STRANGE FIRE.

Sparks from steel striking steel caused a small fire on Saturday morning in a building at the rear of the Ruthven Mansions, which is used by Craft House, Limited. A boy employe was

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

opening a bale of kapoc with a chisel, and the chisel struck a steel band around the bale, causing a spark. This ignited the kapoc, when two fire reels from the Metropolitan Brigade arrived, the outbreak was well in hand, and it was extinguished without having caused much damage.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 12 February 1924, page 8**

FIRE BRIGADE EFFICENCY.

Cr. Cain (representative of the Adelaide City Council on the Fire Brigades Board) has reported to the Parliamentary and bylaws committee that the Bill to amend the Fire Brigades Act of 1913 had now become law. The Bill was introduced to enable the Fire Brigades Board to borrow the sum of £25,000, with which to purchase new appliances, long since considered necessary. A Merryweather telescopic turntable ladder of the latest design, and two of the newest type Dennis engines are already available. The citizens could now rest secure in the knowledge that their lives and property were protected by a brigade second to none in the Commonwealth, and whose equipment was now approaching that standard of efficiency it should long since have attained. It was gratifying to note that the clauses in the Bill objected to by the City Council, and also by the Fire Brigades Board (with but one dissenting vote) had been eliminated from the Bill. The council on Monday recorded its appreciation of the work of its representative on the board, and its thanks for the report.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Wednesday 13 February 1924, page 2**

Fire Brigade Concert

In aid of the funds of the Tubercular Soldiers' Aid Society, a concert will be given in the hall at the Fire Station, Wakefield street, tomorrow evening. The programme is in the hands of leading artists, and will be followed by a turn-out of the brigade. Tickets are obtainable at the Fire Station and from Miss Dvorak. Allan's. Ltd.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 14 February 1924, page 9**

FIRE IN HINDLEY STREET.

At 10.21 p.m. on Wednesday night the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to a fire at the premises occupied by A. Keith, lodging housekeeper, at 127 Hindley street, city. Two reels were dispatched to the scene of the blaze, and a good save was effected by the brigade. The damage was confined to bedding and so on.

**Observer (Adelaide, SA : 1905 - 1931), Saturday 16 February 1924, page 36**

FIRE BRIGADE EFFICENCY.

Cr. Cain (representative of the Adelaide City Council on the Fire Brigades Board) has reported to the Parliamentary and bylaws committee that the Bill to amend the Fire Brigades Act of 1913 had now become law. The Bill was introduced to enable the Fire Brigades Board to borrow the sum of £25,000, with which to purchase new appliances, long since considered necessary. A Merryweather telescopic turntable ladder of the latest design, and two of the newest type Dennis engines were already available. The citizens could now rest secure in the knowledge that their lives and property were protected by a brigade second to none in the Commonwealth, and whose equipment was now approaching that standard of efficiency it should long since have attained.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 18 February 1924, page 6**

BAGS OF LIME ALIGHT.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call at about 11 p.m. on Saturday from Bentham street, off Waymouth street, where it was discovered that several bags of lime at Millers Lime

Depot were alight. The flames were speedily extinguished, the only damage being the destruction of 10 bags of lime.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 23 February 1924, page 49***

FIRE AT A LIME DEPOT.

About 11 p.m. on Saturday the Fire Brigade answered a call to Miller's Lime Depot, Waymouth-street, and extinguished a fire. About a dozen bags of lime were damaged.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 3 March 1924, page 11***

FIRE BRIGADES BOARD.

OPERATIONS DURING 1923.

The report of the chairman of the Fire Brigades Board (Mr. E. Frinsdorf) for the year 1923, states that during the year the following new appliances were added to the board's equipment:— One Merryweather 90 ft. turntable ladder, and three Dennis motor fire engines of a capacity of 500-600 gallons each. The turntable ladder and one Dennis fire engine were installed at the head station, and the remaining Dennis engines at Port Adelaide and Port Pirie stations respectively. A motor hose carriage was also placed at Port Adelaide. The new appliances mentioned would greatly augment the efficiency of the brigades. Pillar hydrants were erected as follow:—Ten hydrants in selected portions of King William-street and ten at Port Adelaide.

Portion of the district of Mobilong, comprising the town of Murray Bridge, had been proclaimed a fire protected area, and the necessary arrangements were being made for equipment and the engagement of the auxiliary firemen. Application was made by the district council of West Torrens for a further extension of the fire protected area to embrace Marleston, Galway Gardens, portions of Kurralta Park, and Richmond. Application was also made by the district council of Grace for the extension of the Fire Brigades Act to the township of Mallala. The lease of the Glenelg fire station property, which contained right of purchase, expired during the year, and the property was purchased by the board. The Mount Gambier fire station building was completed during the year. This property was leased from the town council of Mount Gambier, and the station had been supplied with a motor fire appliance and necessary equipment. The customary inspections of city, suburban and country stations were made by the board during the year and the brigades throughout were found to be working satisfactorily and efficiently. Mr. E. W. Fosberry (representing the contributory companies) and Mr. A. J. W. Lewis representing the suburban and country corporations) retired from the board by effluxion of time and were succeeded by Mr. H. Cox (suburban and country corporations) and Mr. T. C. Reynolds (contributory companies). Mr. T. C. Reynolds resigned during August, and was succeeded by Mr. K. J. Clyde.

The Chief Officer (Mr. J. E. Dickie re-ported that during 1923, 421 calls were received, an increase of 18 compared with 1922. Serious damage was caused by 11 fires, and the number of malicious false alarms was 101. The amount of insurance on property where fires actually occurred was the highest in the history of the brigade, the figures for the last three years being:—1921, £627,047; 1922, £417,009; 1923, £1,404,306.

The strength of the brigade was 105 permanent firemen, 29 auxiliary, and 37 theatre auxiliary firemen, a total of 171 officers and men of all ranks. Over 360 calls were answered by the motor ambulance located at Port Adelaide. Eight additional fire alarms were installed, three at Unley three at Glenelg, and one each at Port Adelaide and Semaphore. making a total of 322. Grinnell sprinklers were placed in seven more premises, making a total of 18.

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 20 March 1924, page 7***

Motor Car Catches Fire While being cleaned at Whittle Brothers' garage, Franklin street, today a motor car burst into flames. The fire brigade was called and the car was saved from serious damage.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Friday 21 March 1924, page 11**

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS.

MOTOR CAR ON FIRE.

About 11.45 a.m. on Thursday a motor car near the Bristol Hotel, Franklin-street, burst into flames and the fire brigade was summoned. The fire was put out by chemical extinguisher, but not before considerable damage had been done to the car.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Friday 4 April 1924, page 6**

Fire in Bloor Court Shortly after 1 o'clock today a call was received by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade to attend an outbreak in Bloor court, off Currie street. The motor hose, under Foreman Buchanan, was quickly des-patched. Some rubbish stored in a corner of McMahon's bulk store, where the newspaper runners are served, had caught alight. The flames were extinguished. Charles Russell & Company's bulk store and Wishart's Clothing Factory are in the same building. There was little damage done.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 26 April 1924, page 1**

Sensational fire on Oil Ship at Port Adelaide

TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION OCCURS

One Killed : Ten Injured

SOUND HEARD PLAINLY IN DISTANT SUBURBS

Heroic Work by Firemen and Ship's Officers

COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF SHIP LIKELY

CASUALTY LIST FIREMEN AND CIVILIANS

B. GREENMAN (Adelaide Fire Station)— Killed.  
CHARLES McKAY (26), 376 Unley Road (Fireman)— Cut ear and cut right leg.  
JOHN KEVIN WALSH (28), Fire Station, Semaphore— Fractured right fibula.  
PATRICK RYAN (25), Freeling—Abrasion to left leg.  
MARTIN MOORE (24), 2 Bate Terrace, Military Road, Semaphore (Fireman)—Broken right leg, lacerated wounds nose and scalp.  
HENRY SAYERS (39), Adelaide Fire Station (Fireman)— Bruised chest and cuts.  
EDGAR CORNISH (38), Fire Station, Port Adelaide— Injuries to abdomen.  
LAURENCE ANTHONY (20), Langham Place, Portland— Abrasions to left knee.  
JACK KEY (21), Penrith, New South Wales (Engineer)— Burns; seriously ill.  
WILLIAM RYAN, Fire Station, Port Adelaide— Wounds right arm and leg.  
STUART EASTON (24), Unley Road, Unley (Fireman)— Abrasions to face and back.

OFFICERS OF THE VESSEL

Captain W. J. Gorst, New York.

Chief Officer Jeffress.

Boatswain, Ben Mahomet.

Fifth Engineer Whyllie.

The crew comprised 37 Lascars, 13 Malays, and 17 Europeans. Captain W. J. Gorst of New York was in charge.

Calamity unparallelled in the history of Adelaide occurred tonight at the Port.

At five minutes to eight the big Ellerman and Buchnall cargo steamer City of Singapore, berthed at No. 2 Quay, Birkenhead, caught fire. She had on board 700 tons of petrol and other oils, the undischarged remains of a cargo she had brought from New York. Strenuous efforts were made by the officers and crew to stifle the flames, but without success. Firemen were sent to the scene from the Port Station, and a detachment went down with three engines front the head metropolitan station in Wakefield street. The fire float was brought into commission. Huge streams of water were poured down the hatches into the blazing holds in the hope which early was regarded as forlorn, of checking the outbreak before the flames reached the more inflammable oils.

#### Explosion was feared.

When a reporter from "The Mail" went aboard soon after 9 o'clock and asked the chief officer how things were going the latter gave warning instead of hope. "I cannot tell you how it will go," he said, "but I do know it is a matter of life and death. You are running a risk— a big risk of being blown to pieces." Nevertheless, the fight continued. Realising the danger neither the firemen nor the officers flinched. Nor did one of the crew. Naturally a big crowd of people gathered in the vicinity to watch. But the danger of explosion was made known, and most of the spectators were prudent enough to keep at a respectable distance. It was in one of the holds — said to be No. 4— that the fire appeared to have its grip. From this there flowed a thick and angry stream of smoke, with now and again a fierce burst of flame. The forms of the fear-defying firemen were silhouetted now and again against the smoke clouds. Near by when the fire broke out was moored the steamer Mackarra. As soon as the danger was realised her captain moved her out of the danger zone. When the explosion occurred there was a scatter of all who feared they might be within reach of the flying and burning debris. Quickly, however, they rallied, and set to work to rescue the injured and ascertain whether any were killed. A big death list was feared. Nevertheless danger still lurked. Smaller explosions kept occurring intermittently. And the fire rapidly spread through-out the ship until she appeared to be a mass of flame. Long before midnight the fate of the City of Singapore was sealed. She was destined to be completely gutted, and perhaps utterly destroyed.

Accordingly thought was concentrated on the rescuing of the injured and on the protection of the wharves and sheds. The injured were taken to the Port Adelaide Casualty Hospital. Eight were transferred to the Adelaide Hospital. Meanwhile the crowd settled down again to watch the abnormal spectacle. Soon it became known that another explosion, bigger than the other, was feared. The flames were slowly eating their way to a hold in which 4,000 cases of inflammable oil were stored.

#### Tragic Explosion

It was just at ten minutes to eleven that the thousands of anxious spectators heard an ominous rumble, followed by a roar as flame and smoke shot out with the burst of a terrific explosion. Cries of agony were heard, perhaps from some victims of the upheaval, perhaps from some anxious individuals in the crowd who sensed that the explosion must almost surely have hurled some at least of the intrepid firefighters to a terrible death. The force of the explosion was terrific. Timbers and fittings of the ship were blown high into the air. The side of the Eastern No. 2 Quay Shed was blown in. When the explosion occurred a reporter was telephoning from near the scene to "The Mail." The sound came plainly over the line. Then a call came over the line, "For God's sake get in touch with the ambulance people, and send them down here. There are people killed.

#### Help from Headquarters

As the gravity of the fire became realised calls for assistance were sent to the head fire station, which sent altogether three fire engines and arranged for sufficient ambulances.

#### Thrilling Moments

Two of the Port Adelaide firemen were suddenly missed, and word was circulated that they had probably been entombed below deck. A heroic and thrilling attempt at rescue was made by several firemen, and officers and sailors of the ship. They were assisted by volunteers from the crowd. Above the roaring of the flames there was heard, a cry of "Men below deck," and a scene of intense excitement pre-vailed. Men gallantly rushed into the heart of the conflagration in an effort at rescue. Several bravely went below and the crowd held their breath, until a party came along dragging human freight with them. He was unrecognisable. Quickly the man was handed over the side, where eager assistants were waiting for him. A motor car was in readiness, and the injured fireman was hastily taken to the Port Casualty Hospital.

#### Station Officer Injured

Fireman Barrington was working on the ship when the explosion occurred, and next him was Station Officer Sayers. The firstnamed was thrown bodily to the wharf. So violent was the explosion that pieces of the vessel struck the wharf shed 60 ft. away from the scene and caused much damage. The noise was distinctly heard in the city. Shop windows in Port Adelaide were shattered. The Port Adelaide ambulance was quickly on the spot, and willing hands facing further danger, searched for any members of the crew or firemen who might be injured. Station Officer Sayers did not escape the flying debris, and he was quickly got away from the scene to the Port Casualty Hospital. Fireman Barrington, when he saw his superior officer being removed to the ambulance, remarked, "There goes one of the finest chaps you could possibly meet. We believe the fifth engineer is missing, and there might be some of our chaps also in it before it is all over."

#### Force of Explosion

The spectators, of whom there were many hundreds, were greatly alarmed at the turn of event, and policemen, fire men, and ambulance men had difficulty in keeping them out of harm's way. Immediately after the explosion the vessel amid-ships was one huge sheet of flame. The force of the explosion blew the top off one of the cowls, weighing several hundred-weights, and landed about 150 yards down the wharf, while another was found lying near the sheds by the boat.

#### Fireman's Escape

Fireman Wood had a miraculous escape. He was working on the vessel when the explosion occurred, and was right in the centre of it, but he came through the ordeal with scarcely a scratch. He remarked:—"I jumped to the wharf like all the rest of the boys, and logs of wood, pieces of iron, and masses of debris were raining around me for what seemed like minutes. One of the boys was blown clean into the river, and I believe was rescued by a launch. Thank God I've escaped without a scratch."

#### Assistance from Adelaide

Immediately news of the fire reached the metropolitan station three motor engines were dispatched to the scene to render assistance.

#### At the Hospital

Large crowds gathered outside the Port Adelaide Casualty Hospital, and thousands of people are pouring out from every direction to the scene of the fire on No. 1 Quay. At 12.30 a.m. eight men had been dispatched to the Adelaide Hospital suffering from burns and other injuries. Four others were receiving attention at the Casualty Hospital.

#### Heroic Officer

One of the most valiant workers in the effort to subdue the flames was Chief Officer Jeffress, of the City of Singapore. He never left his post until his sufferings compelled him to. He was assisted from the ship with head swathed in bandages and covered in blood and taken to

hospital for medical attention. The officer displayed extreme gallantry in collaborating with the working firemen. When the doctor came to him he said, "I must go back to the ship. I promised Mr. Bruce, Crosby's manager, to look after No. 6 hatch. There is case oil in it, and they don't understand the ventilation." After the explosion the chief officer helped in the work of rescue, and was instrumental in recovering the boatswain from a perilous position in the coal bunkers. When asked for a statement as to the explosion he answered, "I can't remember anything about it." At 12.15 Chief Officer Jeffress was admitted to the Port Casualty Hospital with his head bandaged and spattered with blood. While receiving attention he declared his intention of going back to the ship, which, despite the doctor's orders, he insisted on doing. He was instrumental in saving the ship's chronometers, and in the excitement and surrounded by perils he still found time to get somebody to ascertain the condition of the fifth engineer. A pressman sitting at the phone in the Port Casualty Hospital, heard a voice over the phone — "Hallo! Is that the Port Casualty Hospital?" "Yes." "Well, I'm speaking for the chief engineer of the City of Singapore. How is the "fifth?" Reluctantly the pressman had to impart the information that Mr. Wylie had just previously been conveyed to the Adelaide Hospital, and was in a very critical condition.

#### Busy Doctors

Ready assistance was given by medical men in the district and prominent among the workers at the hospital depots were Drs. Cherry, Betts, and Kennedy.

#### Brave Workers

Three-quarters of an hour after the explosion, when the alarm of an entombed fireman was given, a party comprising Constable Furber, L. W. Tulloch, and C. McCawley without hesitancy and at the risk of a further explosion, made their way below and effected a rescue.

#### Injured Men

The fifth engineer of the boat was removed to the Adelaide Hospital in a very critical condition. The boatswain was treated in the Casualty Hospital, suffering from burns and shock, and the chief officer was treated for minor injuries. These are the only three members of the crew who are known to be hurt.

#### Further Explosion Probable

It has been ascertained that there are 4,000 cases of explosive oil in No. 6 hold, and it seems inevitable that this will be exploded when the flames reach it, and the result will be far more severe than what has already happened. In the Engine Room Chief Officer Jeffress of the ship was accompanied by Plainclothes Constable Furber and Mr. W. McCawley, and Mr. L. W. Tulloch and they heroically descended into the vessel next to the hold where the fire was burning fiercely. They recovered Fourth Engineer McLeod, who had been calling for help, and who was found lying in a semi-conscious condition partly under a steel plate which had been torn down by the explosion. He was carried up by the party and sent to the hospital.

#### Fireman's Story

Station Officer Whitehair, who was standing on the ship looking down the hold where the fire was, gave a description of the explosion. He said: — "We thought we had the fire finished, as it looked dead black below, when suddenly a terrific explosion occurred. I was hurled from the ship's deck on to the wharf, debris falling all around me. I picked myself up and found that I had landed on my helmet, which was badly dented. I went on board where the flames were leaping about 50 ft. into the air. With the assistance of some other men I got ashore a couple of injured firemen who had been hosing into the hold. Police Assistance The police officers on duty at the time of the explosion were Sgt. McInerney and Constable J. Rawlings. They were standing opposite the seat of the fire on the wharf and were knocked down by the force of the concussion. Fortunately they escaped injury. Although they were blown over in forcible somersaults and with the debris falling around them.

### Flying Debris

As evidence of the force of the explosion a large fragment of steel plate forming the top of the skylight of the steamer and weighing about 30 cwt., was thrown to the rear of the wharf shed and crashed through the roof in its course, tearing a hole in the galvanised iron. A peculiar result of the explosion was the fact that the far side of the shed, immediately opposite the steamer, was severely damaged by the explosion and the door on the other side, which ran on rollers, was blown inward into the shed by the rush of air toward the scene of the devastation.

### The Fated Ship

The City of Singapore was built last year for the Ellerman line. She is a steel screw vessel of 6,567 tons gross, and is registered at Liverpool. She is 433 ft. long and has six holds.

### HEAD BLOWN AWAY

One of the killed was a man named Bert Greenman. When examined at the Port Adelaide Casualty Hospital it was found that the top of his head had been blown completely away.

### COURSE OF THE FIRE

Position at Midnight In the excitement and strenuousness of the fight it was almost impossible to get a clear and connected story of the beginning and the course of the fire. But it appears to have started in the engine room, adjoining the engine room aft is No. 4 hold, where a large quantity of kerosine and benzine—statements as to the quantity varied from 15,000 to 20,000 cases was stacked. This is probably the oil that exploded before 11 o'clock. From No. 4 hold the fire crept into No. 5 further astern— which was full of wheat. At midnight the flames were creeping well into the wheat and toward No. 6. hold, astern, in which there was 4,000 cases of petrol and kerosine. When the petrol is reached it was regarded as practically certain that another explosion would occur, and there were fears that this would have tremendously greater power, and perhaps do more damage to Port Adelaide buildings. In fact Mr. Farquhar found it advisable to issue a warning. So far the fire does not seem to have gone through the engine room to the forward part of the ship, in which are the Nos. 1, 2, and 3 holds. No. 3 is said to contain coal, and Nos. 1 and 2 more petrol. The firemen are powerless to quench the fire. The heat is so terrific that they are unable to get near enough to make effective use of the water. There seems to be no alternative but for the fire to burn itself out.

### Every Precaution Taken

As far as can be ascertained every pre-caution to guard against fire was taken. The discharging was accomplished under the watchful eye of the inspector of inflammable oils, and the steamer had on the usual funnel covers. There was a watchman at the gangway to collect matches from the stevedores, and also to assist the chief officer to prevent smoking around the deck. A watchman at each end of the ship saw to it that no persons anywhere in the vicinity of the City of Singapore lighted matches while the work of discharging was proceeding. More than 22,000 cases of motor spirit have been taken from the holds of the Singapore since she has been in Adelaide, and 600 tons of cargo for South Africa were placed on the ship shortly before the fire broke out. While the work of loading and discharging was going on all galley fires were extinguished. Statement of Captain Capt. W. J. Gorst, master of the ill-fated vessel, made the following statement: — "I was sitting on board at about 8 o'clock when the watchman came up to me and said. 'She's on fire aft.' "The fire broke out in the deep tank, or No. 4 hold, which had 9,000 cases of kerosine and 4,000 cases of motor spirit. Above No. 4 there was a fleet of motor cars for Fremantle. "The No. 4 cargo was shifted from No. 1 hold to make room for wheat to be loaded here for South African ports. This transfer was completed at 2.30 today. "I have no idea how the fire started— absolutely none. When I was told of the state of affairs I ordered all the native crew out, and said to the fifth engineer, 'Go down and open the valves and flood No. 4.' At the same time I told him to

shut off all steam, as there was one dynamo working on the donkey boiler. At my request Harbor Pilot Muir stood by to remove the ship from her berth if it was thought wise.

#### Nurses' Fine Work

Nurses at the Port Adelaide Casualty Hospital had a strenuous time, and Sisters Bird and Smith, with ready assistance, worked unceasingly dressing wounds of the injured to permit of an immediate removal to the Adelaide Hospital, as the capacity of the local institution is very limited. The scene in the two small wards at disposal resembled a field dressing hospital.

#### LATEST NEWS

##### Vessel Doomed

At 2 o'clock on Sunday morning the fire was still raging and the firemen were concentrating on an effort to save No. 6 hold. No. 5 hold was partly filled with wheat and a constant stream of water was kept running on it, in the hope that the flames could be kept away from the oil. At 2.30 the fire was raging more fiercely than ever, and the oil in No. 6 hold was expected to explode at any minute.

##### Wharf Shed Endangered

In order to prevent the spread of the fire to the wharf if possible, firemen were engaged in hosing the decking, bravely sticking to their posts within a score of yards of the flames. In the wharf shed is stacked a quantity of cased general cargo, and owing to the damaged state of the shed this is exposed and Customs and police officers are watching it to prevent pilferage.

##### Agents and Route

Elder, Smith, & Co. are the South Australian inward agents of the ship, while the outward loading agents are William Crosby & Co. Capt. Gorst was unable to give an estimate of the value of the cargo, or to say whether the ship or the cargo was insured. The City of Singapore was bound for Fremantle, thence via South Africa to her home port New York. Homeless Crew The crew of the vessel are being housed at the Sailors' Home, and the South Australian agents have made provision for their comfort.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 28 April 1924, page 8***

##### MOTOR CAR BURNT.

At 12.15 a.m. on Sunday the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to attend to a motor car which was afire on the Hilton road, near to the Mile-End Railway Goods Shed. The vehicle was owned by Mr. A. L. Cook, an engine driver, who lives at, William street, Hilton. As he was driving along the road the car back-fired, and then burst into flames. The body of the motor was destroyed before the brigade arrived. The vehicle was insured.

***Border Watch (Mount Gambier, SA : 1861 - 1954), Tuesday 29 April 1924, page 3***

Terrible Explosion at Port Adelaide.

FIRE ON OIL, SHIP, CITY OF SINGAPORE.

THIRTEEN FIREMEN BLOWN UP, THREE KILLED ; TEN INJURED

An appalling tragedy occurred on Saturday night on the Port Adelaide River, when in a heroic attempt to save property three firemen were killed and ten received serious injuries. The steamer City of Singapore, bound from America to Australian ports, with a large quantity of cased and bulk oil, had discharged most of her inward cargo, when a fire suddenly burst forth from amidships. It was preceded by minor explosions until just before 11 p.m., when the bulk oil tank in the bottom of No. 4 hold blew up with terrific force at a moment when the fire chiefs were congratulating themselves on a miraculous save. Three firemen were hurled to their doom and 10 others were injured, in addition to members of the crew and a few civilians. The

intense heat buckled the plates and broke the back of the steamer, which is as complete a wreck as though she had been driven ashore on a coral reef. The whole of the amidships section of the ship was gutted and the engineers' quarters were completely burnt out. The concussion from the explosion was so stupendous that it rattled windows and doors as far away as the foothills, and many residents thought there had been a severe earthquake.

—The Casualties.—

The following is a list of the casualties :—Fireman James Hickey, of Ballarat, 22 years, he won a gold medal at Penola last year for being the most popular footballer, killed. Fireman G. J. A. Anderson, Semaphore, 23 years, killed. Fireman Albert Greenman, 20 years, killed. The following were injured :—Charles Harold Mc-Rae, John Kelvin Walsh, Patrick Ryan, Martin Roy Moore, Edgar William Cornish, Henry Thomas Buyers, William Mathias Ryan, Stewart Easton, T. C. Booth, Bedwell, Lawrance Anthony, Jack Keys, Mamud Mayang.

—Fighting the Outbreak.—

Never previously in the history of Port Adelaide has a more thrilling episode occurred in connection with shipping than on Saturday night, when, as a result of a fire, followed by a terrific explosion, the fine, modern cargo-carrying steamer, City of Singapore, a vessel of approximately 7,000 tons, had her back broken, and three firemen attached to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, and 10 other firemen, and members of the crew and others suffered more or less injury. Shortly before 8 o'clock the coloured seaman on duty on the steamer was aroused by an explosion at No. 4 hatch, which is situated right amidships. Upon investigation he found that the hatch covering and hatches had been blown off. He raised the alarm. The coloured crew was ordered ashore, and the Fire Brigade was called at 8.5 p.m. The combined efforts of the city and seaport brigades were successful in damping down the fire, which was originally confined to cased oil and general cargo. After an hour or so it looked as though a ticklish job had been satisfactorily accomplished. Inspection by Chief Officer Dickie and the captain of the ship seemed to point to the fact that it required only the flooding of the hold to make everything safe. Hardly had this course been determined upon when a shattering explosion rent the night air. That was at a few minutes before 11 p.m. In the city many thought that the resultant earth tremor and muffled concussion was the outcome of an earthquake, but enquiries soon elicited the truth. When the explosion occurred the men attached to the fire brigades were huddled around the combings of the hatch, pouring water on to the smouldering debris.

—A Miraculous Escape—

Chief Officer Dickie, of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, had an unenviable experience, and from which he was fortunate to escape with his life. After water had been played on the centre of the fire for some time the outbreak was to all outward appearances abated, and Chief Officer Dickie went to the cabin to report to the captain to that effect. He had no sooner entered the cabin and closed the door when the terrific explosion occurred, This had the effect, of distorting the door, which could not be opened. There was no possible chance of getting out that way. "I looked all round," said Mr. Dickie on Sunday, "and could not find an opening to get out through. I was bottled up like a rat in a trap. How the captain got out I do not know. I wandered through the alleyways right up to the heart of the blazing inferno. Eventually I got up into the saloon, where I was fortunate in finding one of the portholes which would unscrew. There was the fire raging fiercely around me, and only the small porthole offering any hope of escape. I did not know when another explosion would occur, so I set vigorously to work to worm my way out through the port-hole. How I managed to get through I do not know, but eventually I found myself on deck. Inwardly I said to myself it is 'Good-bye, Jackie Dickie, this time.' By the time I found my-self on deck again everybody was off the ship. I am not going to say that I was the last to leave it, but it was a considerable while after the explosion before I was able to extricate myself, and by that time all shore communication bar the mooring lines and a rope or two were gone. I looked over the side of the ship, saw a rope and lost no time in sliding down it on to the wharf."

**Border Watch (Mount Gambier, SA : 1861 - 1954), Tuesday 29 April 1924, page 3**

THE OUTBREAK UNDER CONTROL  
GRUESOME DISCOVERY OF BURNT BONES.

A FIREMAN STILL MISSING,

Adelaide, April 29.

The fire on the steamer City of Singapore is now completely under control. The vessel cost £100,000 to construct twelve months ago.

In their endeavours to quench the flames the firemen have filled number 4 and 5 holds with water, and the engine room is in a similar state. The lower part of hold number 6 was also reached by the water, but there is no water in the three holds forward.

The steamer Bassano will load the wheat and flour that was intended for shipment by the City of Singapore to South Africa.

—The Missing Men.—

Yesterday one of the fire brigade officers made a gruesome discovery of a few burned bones and metal articles worn by a fireman alongside No. 4 hatch, There it was that the fire burnt fiercely immediately after the explosion. The discovery of a key there fitting Anderson's locker leads to the belief that the remains are those of Fireman Anderson, who was missing.

No trace has yet been discovered of Fireman Hickey, who possibly was thrown into the air by the concussion, and probably fell into the gaping cauldron.

The Inquest into the facts surrounding the death of Fireman Greenman has been fixed for tomorrow.

The condition of Fifth Officer John Key is still critical, but the others who were injured are progressing.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 29 April 1924, page 7**

FIRE FIGHTING APPLIANCES.

Cr. Cain, one of the Adelaide City Council members on the Fire Brigades Board, has been one of the principal advocates for improved firefighting appliances for the board. As far as land appliances were concerned, he said on Monday, that the brigade was now one of the best equipped in the Commonwealth, since the recent purchase of the motor fire engines, ladders, and so on. Continuing, he said:—"I do not want to say anything at this juncture that will place anybody in an awkward position, but we want a new firefloat. The present vessel is not capable of doing the work it should. It is worn out and obsolete. Some time ago the board wanted to purchase a new motor machine from Merryweather & Co., England, for about £13,000, and, with the exception of the Government representative, the board wanted to buy the complete appliance. When we approached the Government through the secretary of the board they considered that we should purchase the machinery, and have the hull built in Australia, considering that there was only a saving of £750 by securing the plant complete from Merryweather and Co. That did not concern us. We wanted the most efficient firefloat available for Port Adelaide. The Government sent back our request, and said that they would not consent to the importation of the hull, as they thought we should purchase it here. The matter was held in abeyance because we would not agree to alter our decision. That is the position, and the reason why we have not a fire float. Some years ago the Harbours Board voted the sum of £13,000 for the purchase of a float, but why that float was not bought I do not know. I believe that the offer of the £13,000 has been withdrawn, but had it been accepted we would have had a firefloat years ago. The present Port Adelaide firefloat is a wooden vessel, steam driven, with a hand pump quite 30 years old installed. The pump was built to lift

600 gallons a minute, but owing to the head of steam having fallen, it will not do anything like that now. An up-to-date motor float, capable of lifting 2,500 gallons a minute, which would cost about £15,000, is required. Cr. Cain, in conclusion, said he believed that the brigade was one of the most up to date in the Commonwealth, and staffed by some of the finest men. There was great harmony at the brigade, and that was due to the chief officer and his deputies.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Thursday 22 May 1924, page 12**

FIRE AT BRUSH FACTORY.

CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO BUILDING.

Shortly before 8 o'clock on Wednesday night the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to the premises of the South Australian Brush Company, in Flinders-street, where a big outbreak occurred some weeks ago. On arrival it was found that the shed at the rear of the main premises, known as the "blanch pot," had caught alight. The outbreak was quickly extinguished, but not before considerable damage had been done to the building and contents by smoke and water. The cause of the outbreak is not known, but it is thought that the fire had been smouldering for some little time before being seen. The extent of the damage could not be assessed on Wednesday evening.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Monday 28 July 1924, page 7**

WAGES AND WORKSHOP

FIRE BRIGADE EMPLOYEES.

Practically the whole of the employes of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board have become members of the Australian Government Workers' Association, said Mr. F. K. Nieass (secretary of that organisation) today. The rules of the Government Workers' Association were recently amended to permit of employes of Government subsidised institutions joining, and at several meetings of the Fire Brigades section a log of wages and conditions has been prepared and will be presented to the board at an early date. Mr. Nieass stated that the daily wage for fire brigade employes was only 11/, and in consequence a great deal of dissatisfaction existed among the men.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 9 August 1924, page 17**

A BUGGY DESTROYED BY FIRE.

The fire brigade received a call to Mr. P. Todd's coachbuilding works in Wakefield-street at 4.35 p.m. on Friday. An express buggy was destroyed by fire, but the building was not damaged. The origin of the fire is unknown.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 9 August 1924, page 13**

CASUALTIES.

FIRE IN WAKEFIELD STREET.

At 4.35 p.m. on Friday, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to Mr. R. Todd's "vehicle bazaar," at 56 Wakefield street, City, where it was found that an express trap had become ignited. The trap was destroyed, but the premises, which were insured, were not damaged. The cause of the fire is unknown.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 9 August 1924, page 11**

DISCONTENTED FIREMEN.

Communications with the Board.

### Recognition of Union Sought.

The Fire Brigade employes of South Australia have expressed dissatisfaction with the present relations existing between them and the board, and have asked that negotiations should be carried on through the Australian Government Workers' Association, to which organization they claim legal membership. The men also allege that the board has not increased their wages in accordance with the basic wage determinations under the Industrial Code. On Thursday night the employes held a meeting. Mr. E. W. Slaven (President of the A.G.W.A.) was in the chair. The secretary of the association (Mr. F. K. Nieass) reported that the association had received no reply to the letter and log submitted to the Fire Brigades Board on July 15. A copy of the resolutions passed at a meeting of the board, however, had been handed by the Chief Officer to one of the firemen. The statement was neither addressed nor signed. In the subsequent discussion, the men dealt fully with it. Replies to Communications. The board's resolutions, and the replies resolved upon by the men were as follow:—

(1) That the Fire Brigade employes be reminded that the board on February 28, 1912, entered into an agreement with its employes for the formation of a Firemen's Union, comprised only of those in its employ. Answer. —That the 1912 agreement did not in any way enter into the present position, as the old association had been out of existence for a number of years. They refused to recognise it.

(2) That on August 28, 1920, the board and its employes appeared before Mr. President Brown, who fixed the minimum wage to be paid. Answer.— That was merely a matter of history.

(3) That when the Industrial Code was introduced, the board welcomed its employes coming under its provisions. Answer.— The employes would point out that the code specifically covered fire brigade employes, without reference to the opinions of the board.

(4) That the board, when the basic wage was raised, increased the wages of its employes by 3/6 a week. Answer.— We respectfully submit that the provisions of the Industrial Code regarding the basic wage have not been complied with since the code became operative in 1921. For instance, when the basic wage was increased by 9d. we received only 6d. We did not receive the increase of 2d., nor the last increase of 7d. a day.

(5) That when the basic wage was reduced by 2/ a week, the board did not reduce the employes' wages by that amount, as it had power to do. Answer. —As they were not directly working under the Industrial Code, through having no industrial organization, and therefore were not registered, the position did not affect them in any way.

(6) That the board intended to raise wages by 2/ a week in accordance with the latest finding of the basic wage. Answer. — That they considered the proposed 2/ totally inadequate, unless the board meant 2/ a day. They accepted it, however, as from June 15, without prejudice to their court case; and further, that such was not in accordance with the latest basic wage.

(7) The board was always willing to confer with its own employes only in any matters affecting the service, and if the result of such conferences were not satisfactory, the board would not oppose bringing the matter before the Court in accordance with the provisions of the industrial code and the existing agreement between the board and its employes. Answer.— We emphatically protest against the conservative and obsolete methods of the Fire Brigades Board in refusing to negotiate with the employes through their industrial organization, and refuse to negotiate with the board on any matters unless the union secretary is one of the representatives. In order to ensure a friendly spirit and proper understanding with the board, we preferred to meet them in conference, but as they have refused to recognise our union, we will immediately state the case before the Industrial Court, unless the Board alters its attitude and negotiates with us through the A.G.W.A. We appreciate the board's guarantee that no obstacle will be placed in our way in bringing the matter before the Court, but we cannot in any way recognise that 1912 agreement.

8. That all communications from the employes to the board must be sent through their chief officer. Answer. — That in all matters which necessitated approaching the board, communications must be sent through the officials of the A.G.W.A. but that minor matters could be submitted to the chief officer. Definite Reply Asked For. It was decided to ask the Government to instruct their representative on the Fire Brigades Board to do his utmost to secure the recognition of the Australian Government Workers' Association to which the firemen legally belong, as the registered constitution of that organization covered the employes of the fire brigades. A vote of confidence in the A.G.W.A. was carried, and it was decided to ask the board to give a definite reply Monday week. Another resolution was "that all employes, except salaried officers, be expected to join the A.G.W.A., otherwise we will have no social dealings with them after Saturday, August 16."

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Saturday 23 August 1924, page 8**

#### FIRE IN ROOM

The Adelaide Fire Brigade was called out at 10.39 last night to the Hospital Radium Company's premises in Hindmarsh square. A small room was burning. Much damage was done. The fire had been caused by a radiator which was between two wooden shelves. The blaze was extinguished in half an hour.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 23 August 1924, page 13**

#### ELECTRIC RADIATOR CAUSES FIRE.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call at 10.40 p.m. on Friday night from the Grenfell Street Arcade fire alarm. On arrival there they found the fire to be at the premises of the Hospital, Electric, and Radium Company, Limited (makers of hospital requisites), of Hindmarsh square. The blaze was started through an electric radiator having been left connected. A show case and its contents were damaged by the fire, other wise no serious loss was sustained by the firm.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 25 August 1924, page 6**

#### FIRE BRIGADE EMPLOYES.

The Chairman of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board (Mr. C. Frinsdorf), when questioned on Saturday regarding resolutions passed at the meeting of the Fire Brigade section of the Australian Government Workers' Association on Thursday night, stated:—"The board has never refused, but has always been willing to receive a deputation from its employes, but so far that has not been availed of by the employes.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 27 August 1924, page 9**

#### FIRE BRIGADE EMPLOYES.

#### THREATENED RESIGNATION.

#### MEN GIVE 48 HOURS' NOTICE.

As a result of a unanimous vote on a ballot, the Fire Brigades' section of the Australian Government Workers' Association, have issued an ultimatum to the Fire Brigades Board, and they threaten to resign.

A further development of the critical stage of the negotiations between members of the union and the Fire Brigades' Board occurred at a meeting of the fire brigades section of the Australian Government Workers' Association, held on Monday evening. Mr. E. W. Slaven presided over a large attendance and was supported by ten members of the State council. Recently a ballot was taken on the following question: —"Are you prepared to tender your resignation unless the Fire Brigades' Board gives effect to our resolution, re the recognition of the union, and agrees to a conference." The returning-officer, Mr. P. Watt, reported that 72

ballot papers had been issued and 67 were returned. The whole 67 members voted yes. The report was received with acclamation. After a long discussion the following resolution was carried unanimously. "That we issue an ultimatum to the board to the effect that they be given 48 hours' notice to come to a decision re re-organising the union, otherwise we all tender our resignations in accordance with the unanimous affirmative ballot taken to-day." Copies of this resolution were ordered to be sent to the Chief Secretary and the Fire Brigades' Board. A resolution was also passed in favor of preparing a full history of the case and its submission to the press, and to ascertain whether it was necessary to give 14 days notice. The notice to the Board is timed so that the 48 hours will expire at noon to-morrow, and a special meeting will be held in the evening to consider any reply received, and decide upon the future course of action. The chairman reported having attended a meeting of the auxiliary firemen, who expressed their loyalty to the permanent men. It was resolved to accept them as members. It is probable that the fire brigade section will have the full support of the Government Workers' Union in any action taken, should the board refuse to recognise the union.

#### BOARD NOT TO MEET TILL FRIDAY.

The chairman of the Fire Brigades Board, interviewed yesterday, stated that as the Board would not meet until Friday, he was not in a position to say what action would be taken. "We have a country representative on the board," he said, "and we cannot hold a meeting before Friday. Only a full attendance of the board can deal with the present situation."

#### ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE PROPOSED.

Mr. F. G. Scarfe (managing director of Harris, Scarfe, Ltd.), when informed of the ultimatum yesterday, said:—"It would be a disgraceful thing if the board allowed the men to strike without making some provision. There should be a round table conference, including insurance companies and all concerned to get at the seat of the trouble. We are well protected by the sprinkler system, and with a little extra care we shall not fear an outbreak. But there are others who are not so well gate-guarded, and it would be dreadful to think of the community being unprotected against fire. There is always a peaceful way out of such situations as these, and I shall be surprised if saner reasoning does not prevail. I am quite sure that if the firemen go on strike, and anything happens the citizens of Adelaide will not be behindhand in dealing with the situation, and capable persons will be found to operate the fire brigade plant.

#### SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS.

Mr. F. A. Lakeman (director of Messrs. Marshall & Co.) said he felt confident that the larger business houses in the city would be able to cope with an outbreak on their own premises, but he would be sorry to think there was no fire brigade available. "It would be a great pity," he said, "to leave Adelaide unprotected in case of fire. There are many premises that rely almost solely on the brigade, and I shall be surprised if the situation is not adequately dealt with in time by those in authority. We ourselves feel quite equal to coping with any fire on our own premises, but in the situation develops unpleasantly it is up to everybody to special precautions against fire, during the crisis." Mr. McNeil (director of Messrs. Foy and Gibson) declared that it was regrettable that those employed by such a service as the fire brigade should resort to direct action. "Some way out of the difficulty must be found," he said, "without involving the public in any unnecessary danger. However, I am quite sure provision will be made to meet any emergency."

#### AN OMINOUS OUTLOOK.

As the Fire Brigades Board will not meet before Friday it seems quite certain that a strike will take place as no reply can be given the ultimatum until the board has discussed it. Should the firemen strike at noon on Thursday, the men concerned would not be in the service on the following day when the board meets, and as the board deals only with its employees it is not likely that the ultimatum will receive a reply. Firemen are dealt with by the board while in the service, but when a man leaves he is in no way connected with the Fire Brigades Board.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Friday 29 August 1924, page 17**

FIRE IN A BOOT WAREHOUSE.

On Friday at 9.18 the Fire Brigade received a call from Chesser-street, off Pirie-street and it was found that a fire had occurred on the first floor in the Cameron Shoe Company Propriety's Boot Warehouse. Owing to the promptness with which the firemen arrived. Little damage was done.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 30 August 1924, page 17**

A FIRE IN GOUGER-STREET.

The Fire Brigade was called to a fire at the premises of Mr. C. E. Cook, a baker, of Gouger-street, on Friday afternoon. Some shelves and a cupboard were damaged. The fire was caused through a tin of fat boiling over on to a lighted gas ring.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 30 August 1924, page 8**

FIRE BRIGADES BOARD AND EMPLOYEES.

At a meeting of the Fire Brigades Board in Adelaide on Friday the following motion was adopted:—"That the secretary of the Australian Government Workers' Association be informed that the board has never received any official notice from members of the brigade that the agreement entered into between them and the board dated February 28, 1912, has been nullified, and the only notification from the boards' employes on this subject is contained in a petition dated August 23, 1924, in which the men assert the agreement has died a natural death. That the board, while agreeing that the firemen should have a union, are of the opinion that as their duties are for the protection of life and property, they can better perform their work by not affiliating with any other body of men. The board is prepared to meet, say, four members of the brigade, together with the secretary of the A.G.W.A., at a round-table conference to discuss the matter." A meeting of the firemen will be held this evening to consider the matter.

**Recorder (Port Pirie, SA : 1919 - 1954), Saturday 30 August 1924, page 1**

TROUBLE AVERTED.

CITY FIREMEN.

To Confer with Board.

ADELAIDE, Friday.

The Fire Brigades Board resolved today to inform the secretary of the Australian Government Workers' Association that, while agreeing that the firemen should have a union, their duties for the protection of life and property would be better performed without affiliation with any other body of men. The Board was prepared to meet four members of the Brigade, and the secretary of the A. G. W. A. at a round-table conference. Mr. F. K. Nieass (secretary of the A.G.W.A.) said the council of that union was gratified at the decision of the Board to grant a conference, which he claimed would benefit both the institution and the men.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 30 August 1924, page 6**

FALSE FIRE ALARM

Fireman Arrested

Just before 8 o'clock tonight a constable saw a man operate a fire alarm in Steven's place, city. As the constable saw no sign of fire he detained the man until the brigade arrived. As a result of enquiry the brigade came to the conclusion that it was a false alarm. Thereupon the man was taken into custody. He is said to be a fireman.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 1 September 1924, page 6**

FIREMAN ARRESTED.

On Saturday evening, at 7.58 o'clock, a fire alarm was received from the Stephens place alarm. The brigade turned out and reached the spot within three minutes, only to find that it had been hoaxed. Due to the promptitude of P.C. Levie, an arrest was made immediately. The apprehended man, who is a suburban fireman will be charged at the Adelaide Police Court this morning in connection with the incident.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 1 September 1924, page 12**

A MALICIOUS FIRE ALARM.

AN ARREST MADE.

A meeting of firemen, held at Wakefield-street station on Saturday night to discuss the men's dispute with the Fire Brigades Board, was interrupted by the ringing of the alarm bell. All thoughts of "downing tools" which the men may have had were dismissed on the instant. They made a remarkably prompt "turn out," which was the subject of congratulation by the chairman of the meeting (Mr. Slavin). The call was made from the Stephens-place alarm, but on arrival there it was found that the alarm was a false one. Constable Levi, who was on duty in the vicinity, observed a man acting suspiciously, and he took him in charge. He will be brought before the Adelaide Police Court this morning.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Monday 1 September 1924, page 8**

RECONCILED!

Board and Firemen Confer

MEN APPOINT DELEGATES

Having agreed to meet the Fire Brigades' Board at a round table conference, the firemen have appointed Messrs. L. A. Fry and W. A. Reynolds (representing the head station), J. V. O'Leary (Port Adelaide district), W. Mason (out-stations), and F. K. Nieass (secretary of the Australian Government Workers' Association, of which the firemen are members), as their delegates. At a meeting this afternoon this committee will formulate a case for submission to the board at the conference. "Now that a conference has been agreed on, it is a matter of mutual arrangement when it will be held," said Mr. Nieass this morning. "We naturally would like it as early as possible, and it is hoped that it will be held early this week"

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 2 September 1924, page 12**

FIREMAN'S FALSE ALARM.

"You know the trouble we fellows are having. Won't you give me a go?" said Clement Huckell, a sturdy young member of the Norwood Fire Brigade, to Constable Levie, when he was arrested for having maliciously broken a fire alarm in Stephen's place, Adelaide, about 7.55 p.m., on Saturday. Huckell was called upon to answer the charge before Mr. E. M. Sabine, P.M., at the Adelaide Police Court, on Monday morning. He pleaded guilty. Detective-Sgt. Allchurch (for the prosecution) said the information was laid under the Fire Brigades Act of 1890, and the maximum penalty was £5. The facts were that Constable Levie, who was obscured in a shop doorway, saw Huckell smash the alarm, and had arrested him when the brigade turned out. Huckell, who made no explanation, was fined the maximum, inclusive of costs. Fourteen days was allowed in which to pay.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 6 September 1924, page 10**

FIRE BRIGADE AND EMPLOYEES.

At a round table conference held in the board room of the Fire Brigades Board on Friday afternoon, at which were pre-sent Messrs. E. Frinsdorf (Chairman), E. T. Grose, and E. J. Glyde (representing the Insurance Companies), Cr. J. R. Cain (representing the Adelaide City Council), Mr. W. H. Cox (representing country and suburban municipalities), the Chief Officer (Mr. J. E. Dickie), and Mr. H. M. Bristowe (secretary to the board), and Messrs. F. K. Nieass (secretary of the A.G.W.A.), J. V. O'Leary, W. Mason, L. A. Fry, and W. Reynolds (representing the men), it was unanimously resolved that the firemen's section of the A.G.W.A. should be recognised by the Fire Brigades Board.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 6 September 1924, page 15**

"A WATCHMAN THAT NEVER SLEEPS."

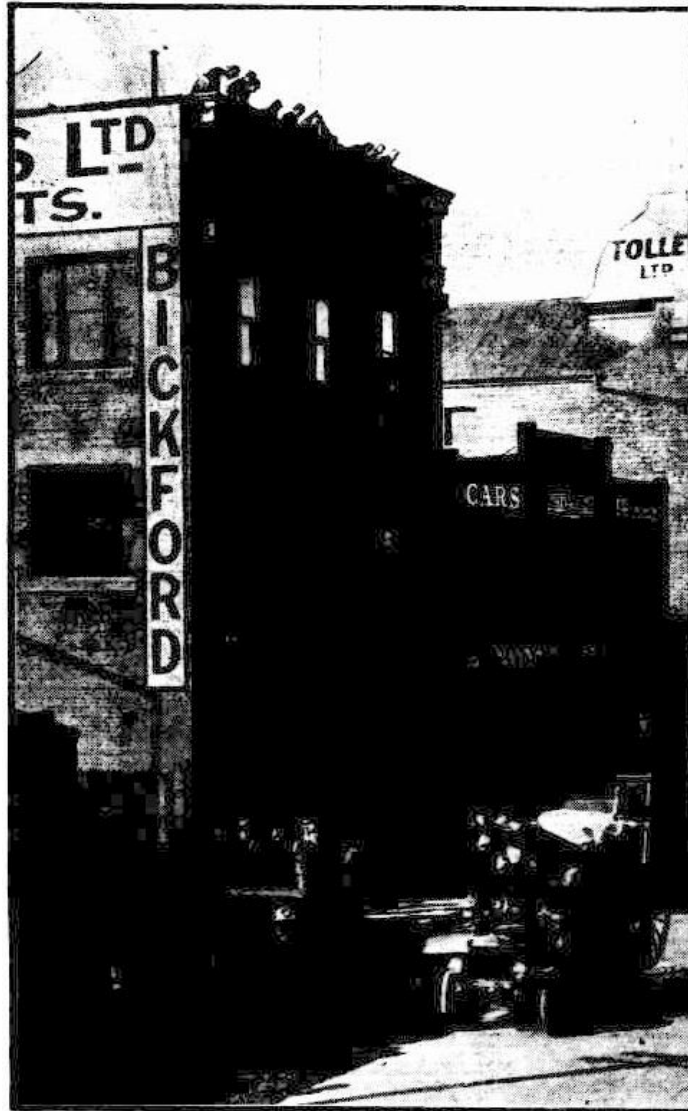
AN AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM. SUCCESSFUL TEST IN ADELAIDE.

Adelaide is justifiably proud of the smartness and efficiency of its Fire Brigade, which will bear favorable comparison with any similar force in the Commonwealth. The Fire Brigade Board, under the chairmanship of Mr. E. Frinsdorf, is thoroughly alive to its responsibilities, and is ever striving to increase the efficiency of the service. But the most capable brigade in the world can be of comparatively little value in extinguishing a fire if it does not arrive on the scene until the flames have secured a firm hold. Too often the services of the brigade have of necessity to be confined to preventing the spread of a fire because the call was received too late.

To increase the brigade's efficiency and to render a "burn out" practically impossible an instantaneous and automatic means of detecting a fire, and of notifying the nearest fire station, is required. Such an apparatus is provided in the May-Oatway Automatic Fire Alarm, which has been aptly described as "a watchman that never sleeps." The company of that name has recently installed its apparatus in the factory and warehouse of A. M. Bickford & Sons, Ltd., Waymouth-street, Adelaide, and with their permission a test was carried out there yesterday afternoon. The apparatus works by the expansion of a thin copper wire due to a sudden rise in heat, an increase of 25 degrees being sufficient to set it in motion. The wire and guard of the detector, or thermostat, are so proportioned as to be naturally self-adjusting, lengthening with every ordinary rise, and shortening with every fall in temperature; but in the centre, or position of equilibrium, there is no change except in case of fire. Supported by the centre of the copper wire is a weight which upon the expansion of the wire completes an electrical circuit and gives the alarm. The apparatus operates an indicator board located in a conspicuous part of the building, and then three things happen simultaneously. An alarm is telegraphed to the fire station, where a disc is exposed giving the location of the fire; an alarm bell is rung outside the building, and a shutter drops on the indicator board showing the portion of the premises where the outbreak has occurred. Yesterday's test was carried out in a courtyard over which is a galvanised iron roof. The thermostat, or detector, was affixed to the ridge pole of the roof about 20 feet from the ground. A shallow galvanised iron tray was placed underneath the apparatus, and partially filled with petrol. At the request of the representative of the company (Mr. A. T. Kerle), who was supervising the demonstration, the majority of those present checked the times of the various events. When all were ready two matches were dropped upon the petrol, which quickly caught fire, the flames rising to a height of less than three feet. The locality chosen for the test was the least favorable the supervisor could have selected, for a strong draught was blowing into the court-yard and sending the flames in all directions, thus disseminating the heat and preventing it from rising to the thermostat. Notwithstanding the unfavorable conditions the alarm gong was heard ringing in 21½ seconds, and an inspection of the indicator board showed that the apparatus was working satisfactorily. Those present adjourned to the front of the building to await the arrival of the fire brigade, and anxious eyes were turned towards "The Advertiser" corner, round which the reel was expected to come. They had not long to wait, for with a promptitude that would be a credit to any service the brigade turned out, and within 2 minutes 25 seconds of the time the matches were struck the firemen were on the spot ready with chemical fire

extinguishers to combat the flames. The test proved entirely satisfactory, and many complimentary remarks were passed by those who witnessed it, both regarding the efficiency of the apparatus and the promptitude of the brigade in answering the call. The time 2 minutes 25 seconds, is particularly meritorious when it is realised that the brigade had to travel nearly three quarters of a mile and travel on some of the busiest streets of the city.

Prior to the demonstration Mr. Kerle gave a brief explanation of the apparatus and of the principals on where it.....[damaged text]



The Fire Brigade arriving at the premises of A. M. Bickford & Sons, Ltd., Waymouth-street, in connection with the test of an automatic alarm. The time taken was 2 minutes 25 seconds.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 9 September 1924, page 11**

FIRE IN WRIGHT STREET.

Motor Car Premises Destroyed.

Damage Estimated at £2,000.

Shortly after 6 o'clock on Monday evening the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to Wright street. Three brigades, in charge of Deputy Officer Cooper, turned out. On arrival it was found that the flames had a good hold on the premises occupied by Messrs. L. Henley and W. G. Loechner, trading as "General Motors, Limited," who rented the building from Mr.

N. C. Harris, a coachmaker, of 15 John street, at the rear of Wright street. The firm had been established for some time for the repair and sale of secondhand motor cars and other vehicles. There were about 26 motor vehicles, chiefly cars, stored in the building at the time, and it is understood that the damage is valued at about £2,000. Mr. Loechner was working in his office at the front corner of the building at the time of the outbreak, and upon hearing a loud report, which appeared to come from the back of the building, rushed out and was confronted by a dense mass of smoke. He at once communicated with the brigade, and then sought the assistance of Messrs. C. & R. H. Wagner, of John street. The flames frustrated any attempt to enter the building, which is a stone structure but an opening was gained through the window in front of the office, and most of the firm's documents were saved. No cause could be assigned for the outbreak. It is understood that the building and contents were insured, but no particulars were available regarding the amount of the insurance. The firemen were able to prevent any damage to the adjoining premises.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Saturday 13 September 1924, page 7**

#### FALSE ALARM

##### Commotion in Rundle Street

Commotion was caused today in Rundle street when the fire alarm at John Martin's premises began to ring. The Fire Brigade arrived quickly, and the police prevented a threatening congestion of traffic. It was a false alarm, however. A sprinkler had been accidentally knocked over in the goods lift, automatically notifying the Fire Brigade and setting the alarm ringing.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 20 September 1924, page 13**

#### THE FIRE BRIGADE DISPUTE.

##### BOARD STILL CONSIDERING LOG.

No reply has yet been received by the firemen from the Fire Brigades Board in regard to the log of wages and working conditions submitted.

Enquiries made on Friday showed that no reply has yet been received by the Fire Brigades section of the Australian Government Workers' Association in regard to the log of wages and working conditions submitted to the Fire Brigades Board at the conference on September 5. Members of the union, when spoken to yesterday, expressed the opinion that the board's reply should be received at any moment now, it being considered that it had had plenty of time in which to go into the details. It was also stated that the firemen were becoming a little restive over the delay. The secretary of the Association (Mr. F. Nieass) said the men were still awaiting the reply of the board, before making another move. The log provided, among other things, for the payment of the following rates: — Foreman. 20/ per day; senior fireman, 17/9; firemen, 1st class, 15/6; 2nd class, 14/9; 3rd class, 14/; 4th class, 13/. A number of special rates were also suggested, involving the payment of 2/6 per day extra to firemen doing tradesmen's work, and to instructors. For motor drivers and their reliefs 1/ per day extra was asked, and provision was made for a service allowance of 6d. a day for over five years' service. A marriage allowance was also included providing for 15/ per week for over 12 months' service, and the amount of annual leave proposed was 21 days. A suggestion was made that an employe should receive 14 days' notice of dismissal, and that the reasons should be supplied. When an employe was summoned to appear before his superior-officer or before the Fire Brigades Board, it was stipulated that the particulars of the charge preferred against him should be made available at least 48 hours prior to the hearing of the charge. The employe should also be allowed access to all reports which were to be put in as evidence against him. He should be allowed to call evidence on his behalf, and hear all evidence against him, and the request was also made that he be entitled to have the assistance of an advocate, but such advocate must not be a member of the legal profession or in any way connected with it. The provision of a pension scheme was asked for, and in the matter of working hours, it was suggested that in all ordinary stations, work should cease at 1 p.m. on

week days, and noon on Saturdays. In the case of accident or sickness, full pay should be granted for 12 months, but after then, if the patient was still partly or totally disabled, the Workmen's Compensation Act was to apply. In case of death by accident, the same Act would apply. In the matter of expenses, it was suggested in the case of the transference of an employe expenses be paid in advance, and a relieving allowance of 7/6 per day in addition to travelling expenses, be allowed. Other items were:— Notification of transfer to be given; no fireman to forfeit any of his leave to attend classes; watch-house duty to be allocated to every employe in their respective stations; after five years' service in the country, any employe to have the option of being transferred to the metropolitan area. It was also suggested that all permanent employes of the Fire Brigades Board should become members of the A.G.W.A. immediately on the expiration of their probationary period, and all auxiliary firemen should join a week after their appointment. It was asked that the agreement should date from July 15, and remain in operation for a year.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Thursday 25 September 1924, page 13**

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS.

MOTOR LORRY CATCHES FIRE.

Considerable damage was done to a Ford motor lorry, owned and driven by Leonard A. Beasley, an electrician, of Stanley-street, North Adelaide, about 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, as the result of the engine backfiring and catching alight when travelling along Victoria-drive, towards the city bridge, King William-road. The Fire Brigade was called to extinguish the blaze.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Saturday 27 September 1924, page 1**

FALSE ALARM

SPRINKLER CALLS BRIGADE

Crowd Robbed of Excitement

"Where's the fire?" That was the question that came from the lips of the large crowd that assembled in Gawler place at 3.15 yesterday afternoon. A fire reel had pulled up outside the warehouse of Matthew, Goode, & Co., Limited. It was found, however, that one of the men had been emptying the warehouse sprinkler tank without advising the brigade. The fact that the tank was emptying registered at the brigade headquarters, which accounted for the speedy despatch of the reel.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 6 October 1924, page 6**

SMALL CITY FIRE.

Shortly before 6 p.m. on Saturday the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to the premises of the Austral Elevator Company, Hindley street, Adelaide. A cask of straw in the backyard had caught fire, but the outbreak had been noticed by two men who were passing, and who, breaking open the door, practically put out the fire.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 11 October 1924, page 9**

FIRE IN GARAGE

Twenty Cars Damaged Brigade's Good Save.

Campbell & Worthington, Limited motor engineers and salesmen, on Tavistock street, suffered a loss of about £1,000 on Friday evening as the result of a fire which broke out among motor vehicles in the interior of their wood-and-iron garage, service station, and repair shop. The building contained about 20 motor cars or lorries (new and secondhand). These included a new Brockway bus chassis, and new Chevrolet and De Dion cars, for which three

makes the firm are agents. The proprietors estimated the-value of the cars with accessories, tyres, and other stock at £3,000, but said the stock altogether was insured to the extent of £2,000. The cars were all the property of the firm. The premises are owned by Mr. Fred Segar, of Rundle street, and had been leased from him by the firm mentioned for the last two and a half years. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade, by prompt work, confined the blaze to the stock in the interior, and from what could be seen about half an hour after the fire was extinguished the damage to the premises was not extensive. The vehicles were more or less badly damaged by fire, smoke, and water. The Bowser petrol pump apparently suffered no damage. The alarm was given by Mrs. Rose Cohen, of Tavistock street, about 6.29 p.m., and within a few minutes the interior of the garage was well alight. The brigade soon had three lines of hose at work from two of the three reels which attended, and in 15 minutes the fire was put out. The offices of the firm are in another garage on the eastern side of the street-opposite the garage where the fire occurred.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 11 October 1924, page 13**

A CITY FIRE.

MOTOR CARS DAMAGED.

Stock, including 20 motor cars, tyres and accessories, valued at about £3,000 was damaged by fire at Messrs. Campbell and Worthington's motor garage in Tavistock-street early yesterday evening. Prompt work was responsible for a good save by the fire brigade, who prevented the flames from spreading to adjacent property. The stock was insured for £2,000. The building was used as a storeroom, the north-eastern corner of which is partitioned off, and has a shop front, with a Bowser petrol pump in front of it. Mrs. Rose Cohen, of Third-avenue, Joslin, who trades under the name of Madame Pauline, was driving in a motor car when she saw smoke issuing from what she thought was a forge. Within two or three minutes the whole premises burst into flames. She gave the alarm, and in doing so cut her hand.

A neighbor stated that he saw a blaze reaching to a considerable height about 6.20 or 6.30 p.m. A strong breeze was blowing, and it seemed likely that the fire would spread. The brigade were on the spot within a few minutes, and the work of subduing the flames appeared to him to be carried out with remarkable promptitude. A small crowd had gathered, and reports, believed to be the exploding of tins of petrol, had the effect of causing the people to move away from the garage.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 22 October 1924, page 13**

FIRE IN CURRIE STREET.

Between 10 and 11 o'clock on Tuesday night the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a message from the Light square alarm of an outbreak on the premises of Messrs. J. L. Campbell & Co., implement makers, of Currie street. Two motor reels were quickly dispatched to the place, and so promptly did the men get to work that the flames were put out after slight damage had been done.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Friday 24 October 1924, page 17**

CITY FIRES.

Early on Thursday evening the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received two calls to fires in the city. The first was shortly after 5 p.m., to premises occupied by Messrs A. A. Brice & Co. at the New Markets, East-terrace, where it was found that a charcoal shed had caught alight through the overheating of the chimney. The blaze was quickly extinguished, only slight damage being done to the flooring, walls, and contents of the building. About 7 o'clock a call was received from Grote-street, where a motor cycle belonging to Mr. E. C. Nelson, of Gouger-street, city, was alight. This was extinguished after slight damage had been caused to the front tyre and petrol tank of the cycle. It is stated that the blaze was caused through an overflow of petrol coming into contact with a naked headlight.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Friday 31 October 1924, page 9**

MIDNIGHT FIRE ALARM

Call to Flinders Street

Just before midnight last night the Fire Brigade was summoned to the Freemason Hall, Flinders street, Adelaide, by Mr. Henry Buckingham, the caretaker. They discovered a small fire in the shop of Mr. B. Wallis, electroplater, of 72 Flinders street, and extinguished it before serious damage was done. A bench and several fittings were destroyed.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 31 October 1924, page 8**

SMALL CITY FIRE.

A small fire causing damage to a bench and a wooden partition was extinguished by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, which was called to E. Wallis & Co., electroplaters, of Flinders street, city, late on Thursday night.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 1 November 1924, page 11**

SMALL SHOP FIRE.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call at about 11.50 p.m., on Thursday, to the Freemasons' Hall, Flinders street, Adelaide. It was found that a fire had broken out at the rear of a shop occupied by Mr. B. Wallis, an electroplater, No. 72 Flinders street. A bench and several other fittings were destroyed, but the blaze was soon subdued. The alarm was given by Mr. Henry Buckingham, caretaker, of the Freemasons' Hall.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 1 November 1924, page 16**

FIRE AT PAINT WORKS.

A fire broke out at 10.35 a.m. on Friday in the Australasian United Paint Company's varnish plant, at the rear of the main paint works. The Port Adelaide Fire Brigade, under District Officer Butler, responded to a call and put the fire out with the aid of chemical extinguishers. The fire was caused by the overheating of a drum of varnish. The only damage done was to the varnish.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 11 November 1924, page 10**

"QUICK BURNER"

Sparks Fly Two Streets Away

SPRINKLERS EXTOLLED

Chief Officer J. E. Dickie (superintendent of the Adelaide Fire Brigade) had just had a hurried breakfast, following a short sleep, when seen this morning. "We received a telephone call from the Crown Inn, Currie street, at 11.23 last night," he said, "and all the machines at the head station turned out immediately. These include two extension ladders, two Dennis pumps, and two hose carriers. Subsequently the Norwood, North Adelaide, Unley, and Thebarton brigades turned out. "Last night's fire was what we term a "quick burner'." continued Mr. Dickie. "With the highly inflammable stocks and material in Richards Buildings, and the fact that, perhaps, 75 per cent. of the building is composed of windows, which create a draft that fans the flames, the task of saving the building was a hopeless one. "The fact, too, that the floors were of wood provided fuel which burned readily. We had no possible chance of saving any part of the structure when we got there, so the only thing to do was for the brigade to prevent the flames spreading to other premises, and to do its best in the meantime to cope with the outbreak. "All the available supply of water was utilised, and the two motor pumps through which the water passed increased the pressure to more than 100 lb. to the square inch.

#### STARTED IN BACK PORTION.

"It is thought that the fire started in the back portion of the building, for that is where it was first noticed. The flames were under control by about 2 o'clock, and some of the machines then returned to the head station, those from the out-stations returning about 2.30. Right through the night relief was sent to the firefighters. "The officers and men of the brigades performed their work well. They did everything asked of them in an orderly and systematic manner. They could not have done more. "This fire is a similar one to that which destroyed the works of Duncan and Fraser, Limited, and Duncan Motors, Limited, early last year. I would like to emphasise the fact that one of the greatest helps to a fire brigade is the sprinkler system. It is obvious how such a system helps to quell an outbreak in a large building by playing water on to it when it begins. If such a system had been installed it would have helped us greatly. "So far as construction is concerned, concrete floors are, of course, far superior to wooden ones, for they form a barrier to the flames, which can only get from one floor to the next by lift openings. "I can sum up this fire by saying that everything which would burn was consumed. Only the shell remains. The building was gutted." Chief Officer Dickie superintended operations at the scene of the fire. He was assisted by Deputy Chief Officer D. P. Cooper. Twenty-eight men attended from the head station and 16 from the four out-stations.

#### CLEANING UP

At the rear of the main station early this morning firemen were busy cleaning up after the night's work. Most of them only returned from the fire about 5 o'clock, and after they had had an hour's sleep they had to go on duty again to clean and test hoses, overhaul and polish up engines and appliances, and generally prepare for eventualities. By 6 o'clock all the machines had been re-stocked with new hose, and were ready for service. With 50 lengths of hose, each 100 ft. long, spread out in the courtyard of the station, gangs of men armed with stiff brooms were vigorously scrubbing them. When they were clean, each one was connected with the water main, the nozzle end blocked up, and then filled with water to a pressure of 70 lb. to the square inch to test it. The good ones were then hung on the watch-tower to dry.

#### THRILLING EXPERIENCES

Despite their strenuous night the men were not grumbling. Some of them had thrilling experiences last night, but they took them philosophically. Three fire-men were stationed on the roof of Shannon's Bazaar in Gilles Arcade, at the rear of the burning building, with instructions to prevent the fire spreading in that direction. "The roof of Shannon's building caught alight three times," one of them said. "The first was about a quarter of an hour after the brigade got there, again about two hours later, and the third early this morning. "The sparks fell as thickly as autumn leaves. Some went as far as Franklin street. Many a time it got so hot that we felt like coming down, but our orders were to stay there, so, of course, we stayed. "On one occasion the pressure of water was so great that a hose almost got away from two of us, who were on a ladder in Currie street. The hose began to jump about and nearly knocked us off the ladder. The crowd below got a ducking." An officer of the brigade stated that men had almost to be dragged off the roofs of adjoining buildings, though, he said, "It must have been like hell up there."

#### SLEEPY FIREMEN

Out in front of the station several sleepy men were waiting to go on duty. "You know," said one, "I had an idea something was going to happen last night. I'd hardly got into bed when dong, dong, dong—the alarm went. I don't know exactly what happened, except that by the time I finished getting my coat on we were at the fire." Exactly how long elapsed between the time the brigade received the call and the time the first engine left the station is not known. It was probably about 30 seconds. Over a period of three months the average time taken in turning out was 40 seconds.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 11 November 1924, page 9**

TREMENDOUS BLAZE IN THE CITY  
RICHARDS BUILDING BURNED OUT.  
FIRE BRIGADE'S HOPELESS FIGHT.  
FLAMES FANNED BY HIGH WIND.

MOTOR CARS AND ACCESSORIES DESTROYED

A fire, the most destructive which has occurred in Adelaide since the great blaze at Duncan & Fraser's motor works in Franklin street in February of last year, gutted the splendid buildings of H. C. Richards, Limited, motor importers and engineers, in Currie street, on Monday night. The alarm was raised shortly before half-past 11, and the flames had obtained a fierce hold when the Metropolitan Fire Brigade reached the scene. Flames and smoke were issuing from the high tower which crowns the structure, and the rear portion of the premises, abutting on Gilles Arcade, was well alight. From the outset the task of the firemen appeared hopeless. The inside of the building was soon a flaming inferno, and, despite the utmost efforts of the fighters, the fire, fanned by a strong wind, worked rapidly towards the front of the edifice, consuming a number of valuable motor cars in its path. The conflagration presented an awe-inspiring spectacle. The glare lit up the surroundings for a great distance, and clouds of sparks and smoke billowed across the buildings on the western side of the arcade. Frequent explosions occurred, and shortly before midnight blazing fittings crashed into the street from the top stories. The firemen were forced to abandon the struggle at the south-western corner, and work their way along the arcade towards Currie street. Lines of hose were run through the front of the building, but they had little effect on the flames. By 12.45 the fire had reached the Currie street frontage, and the whole great building appeared as a flaming ruin.

THE SCENE OF THE FIRE.

The tongues of flame shooting out from the back of Richards Building, where the blaze appeared to have originated, extended almost to Bloor court, towards King William street, and on the west roared out over Gilles Arcade. Richards Building, the seat of the fire, comprises a basement, ground floor, and three other stories, and contains the show rooms and administrative department of H. C. Richards, Limited, motor, importers, on the ground floor. Most of the space on the first floor is devoted to the assembly department of that firm. It is here that the fire appears to have originated. Muffled explosions at intervals denoted the presence of explosive materials in the heart of the blaze. On the first floor are also situated various office suites, and the second and third floors were devoted entirely to the latter purpose. In the basement were refreshment rooms. The building was a comparatively new one, and lent distinction to Adelaide's attractive architecture.

DUNCAN'S FIRE.

The midnight blaze on Monday resembled in many respects the tremendous early morning fire on Wednesday, February 21, 1923, by which the huge establishments of Duncan's Motors, Limited, Duncan & Fraser's, Limited, and the Farmers' Cooperative Union were damaged, the two first-named premises being gutted. The devastation wrought by that monster blaze was estimated to have been in the region of £200,000. As at Monday's alarm the city brigade turned out in full force, but so great a hold had the flames that the suburban appliances had to be summoned to assist in preventing the flames from gaining a destructive hold on the surrounding buildings. Duncan's fire will long be remembered by reason of its spectacular awfulness, the profusion of inflammable and explosive materials which abound in motor works allowing the flames, once they had gained a hold, to spread with lightning rapidity. When the fire at Duncan's buildings was finally subdued, after one of the most gallant fights put up by Adelaide firemen, only the remains of the outer walls were left standing. From the intensity of the flames roaring through the building, Richards Buildings seemed late last night doomed to a similar fate.

#### AN AWE-INSPIRING SPECTACLE.

The alarm was, it is stated, given from the Crown Inn, which is situated on the opposite side of Currie street, to the ill-fated building. A young lady noticed an illumination at the south-western corner of the structure, and, surmising that a fire had



MR. H. C. RICHARDS. M.P., Governing Director of H. C. Richards, Limited.

originated, sounded a warning cry. Immediately a telephone message was sent to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Station, and from it to the suburban stations. The response of the firefighters was such that all the available plant was speedily on the scene of the blaze. Hoses were run into Gibbs's Arcade, a thoroughfare leading from Currie street, and on the western side of Richards' Buildings, to Shannon's Horse Bazaar. Despite the efforts of the men, however, the flames held away, and, notwithstanding the forceful and copious play of water, gradually but surely crept through the building until they had traversed the whole of it. Explosions of petrol in motor cars, the falling of steel girders from the various floors, and the general devastation attendant upon such a catastrophe added to the awe-inspiring spectacle. One fireman had to scurry from the front portion of the building to the street, and in so doing he had a fall, but, fortunately, he did not sustain any serious injury. As the fire raced along the main stairway of the structure, so did flames burst through the front windows, and the torrents of water played from two of the biggest hoses were converted into steam, so great was the heat of the veritable inferno.

#### INSURANCES AND TENANTS.

Mr. H. C. Richards, M.P., who is the Chairman of Directors of the Company, had retired to bed when a telephone call summoned him to the fire. Mr. A. S. Richards, another director, was absent in Melbourne, but the third one, Mr. W. E. Richards, was on the scene with the senior partner. It is understood that the premises were insured, but to what extent was not ascertainable this morning. The building, which comprised four stories and a basement, was fully occupied. Miss Willmott conducted the Wentworth Cafe in the basement, the ground floor and portion of the second one was utilized by the firm, and the remainder of the accommodation was let to tenants, including the State Motor Department. It was one of the most modern and best equipped business blocks in Adelaide.

#### RISKS TAKEN.

In addition to the firemen and police there were numerous civilian workers. So impetuous were some of the latter that the firemen and constables had to warn them to have regard for their personal safety. Superintendent Dickie was in charge of the brigades, and Inspector Harron and Sgt. Stewart directed the operations of the constabulary. A dozen or so motor cars and some office fittings were rescued from the doomed building in the early stages of the

conflagration. The polished chairs, and so on, and the waving palms in pots, which were placed on the northern side of Currie street, were symbolical of similar adornments which perished in the fire. The shell of wall and the charred debris that remained after the flames had wrought their havoc formed a sad remainder of what less than an hour previously had been a veritable hive of industry. It had originally been intended that the floors should be of concrete, but owing to some unforeseen circumstance wood was used, and this added fuel for this occasion.

#### FIRE BRIGADE AT WORK.

A red reflection was first noticed in the sky from King William street about 11.30 and the fire appeared to be burning in the two top stories toward the rear of the block. It was obvious from the vividness of the blaze which then appeared to be restricted to the middle of the block that the fire had secured a good start, but the difficulty of applying the water presented a problem almost insurmountable. In a few minutes the flames were shooting out of the roof, and rushing towards the western windows of the building. It was notable that before the fire in the centre of the building flames were issuing from a small tower room standing on the extreme top north-eastern corner of the block. The firemen played all the available hoses on to the western windows, which spouted fire as fast as the water was flashed on to them. For about half an hour the blaze took complete possession of the two upper floors, and burnt with increasing fury, despite all the efforts of the fire fighters. Red tongues of flames, containing burning wood, papers, and cinders leapt into the air. The metal frameworks of the windows fell right out, and the flames also blew other burning objects out with them. Bundles of office papers were swept out. While the brigade men worked at their highest pitch against the blaze on the western side and two upper stories, employes of Richards Buildings and other men removed office furniture, papers, documents, and chairs from the front offices to the street. All efforts to fight the fire from below seemed futile, as the blaze was rapidly spreading to the bottom floors, and coming to the front offices and showrooms. One could see a fine black limousine enveloped in flames, and within a few minutes the unbridled inferno had taken hold of all the staircases, office framework, petitions, and furniture. The blaze first worked along the western side of the building, then descended from the central holocaust to the ground floor.

#### PUBLIC INTEREST.

The outbreak occurred just as the last suburban tramcars were about to leave Grenfell street. Many had heard the brigade turn out, but the blaze was not at its worst at that moment, and doubtless many were inclined to regard it as just another small fire. Within a few minutes, however, the seriousness of the situation was obvious. The fire speedily became a lurid spectacle, and people gathered to the scene from all directions, some in motor cars, others on cycles and motor cycles, and a number in pyjamas. The police and troopers were quickly on the scene and kept the crowd at a safe distance.

#### UNDER CONTROL.

By 1.30 a.m. the flames had been subdued to such an extent that it was difficult to reach the burning debris with hoses from outside. Practically every thing had fallen from the upper stories and lay below in a charred mass, and apart from the outside walls only steel columns inside remained upright, denuded of all cross beams. The crowd began to thin, as all spectacular interest had gone, and only spurts and flickers of flame illuminated the ruins.

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 11 November 1924, page 1***



ROARING INFERNO AT MIDNIGHT WHICH SEALED THE DOOM OF THE HOUSE OF RICHARDS Exclusive photo, taken for "The News" by J. McAskill at the height of the fire

#### HOUSE OF RICHARDS IN RUINS

#### BUILDING AND GOODS WORTH £150,000 DESTROYED

All Records of Motor Vehicles Department Burned Valued at between £90,000 and £100,000 the House of Richards has been destroyed by fire. Facing Currie street, on the corner of the lane leading to Gilles Arcade, it was a four storey building and basement, which was erected three years ago for H. C. Richards Limited, motor merchants. The owners occupied two floors, and 40 tenants the remainder. Chief of these were the Soldier Settlement and Motor Vehicles departments. The latter, which had recently taken over the suite of offices formerly occupied by the Inspector-General of Hospitals Department, has lost all its records, which date back to 1906. The principal documents of the Soldier Settlement Department are intact. Apart from the loss caused by damage to the building, the walls and pillars of which remain, it is computed that goods worth £50,000 have been burned. H. C. Richards Limited have insurance policies with the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation, Limited, worth £83,500. Of this sum £60,000 is on the building itself.

Like a giant beacon the blaze was seen from the suburbs about 11.30 o'clock, and the last cars to the city bore many people to the scene, while motor cars brought others in from all directions. The police stopped vehicular traffic from entering Currie street from King William street end, as it was feared that the flames might spread and endanger adjoining buildings. On the north side of Currie street spectators lined the footpath, while the throbbing Dennis motor pumps and other fire fighting appliances were stationed in the centre of the street. Lines of hose lay across the roadway in all directions, and firemen with their brass helmets flashing in the glare took up precarious positions as they sought vantage points from which to direct their hoses. In the lane to the west of the burning building which separated it from the premises of Wunderlich Limited, the firemen seemed in imminent danger, standing on the stairway directing water toward the rear. The heat was making their positions untenable, and at 12.20 the fire broke through into the showroom and the men were ordered out into the street.

### Fireman's Narrow Escape

In a few minutes, the front of the whole four floors were well alight, and the flames could be seen behind every front window. About this time a line of hose was directed from the top of the extension ladder to one of the centre windows by two firemen, one of whom had a narrow escape from being hurled from his lofty perch when the hose, writhing under the pressure of water, momentarily took charge. When the front was well alight the heat was tremendous, and spectators across the street were in many instances forced to cover their faces with their hands for brief intervals. When the office of the Texaco Company of Australia, at the north-western corner of the building caught alight, particularly fierce flames shot out of the windows. It is believed that samples of petroleum oils stocked there were the cause. At 12.40 the flooring at the front of the various storeys started to crash as the supports burned through. The joists thus added fuel to the fire burning on the ground floor. This great weight caused the ground floor to collapse in the centre, and water and debris made its way into the Wentworth Tearooms, which occupied the basement. Despite the great heat, the plate-glass windows on the ground floor stood up well, although they were hosed from the outside. The firemen broke a couple to play their streams into the showroom, and on one which survives the sign is visible, "The Rugby Light Car." "It should be alight car," commented a wag. Early on the scene was a tower wagon of the Adelaide Electric Supply Company, with a gang of men ready to disconnect light and power wires, but there was no need for their services, and throughout the fire the street lamps were alight, although the flames and spotlights on the fire appliances provided ample illumination. Mr. W. G. T. Goodman (general manager of the Tramways Trust) was an interested spectator within the fire lines for a couple of hours, and, clad in a motor dust coat he approached close to the blazing building. Two tram conductors were standing behind the police cordon, and one called out to a fireman: "Save our boss; don't let him get burned."

### Aerial Intact

Spectators watched the two slim wireless masts that topped the front walls of the building, and speculated when they would catch, for hungry flames licked about their bases. But they escaped the devouring element, and this morning were standing with the aerial intact. The conflagration reached its strongest point at 12.30. Then the mass of flames could be seen distinctly for a mile or two out of town. The vast building presented one solid wall of angry flames, leaping and licking the roof and walls, and it could be easily seen that there was little hope of saving anything. The firemen kept up the hopeless fight, however, concentrating on the north-eastern corner of the building toward which the flames were steadily making their way. The plateglass windows at the north-western corner of the structure, which had hitherto withstood the heart of the fire, were battered in by the firemen and the hose inserted to check the flames which were feeding greedily on a mass of fallen floor at that spot. A little later and the rumble which marked another fall of a floor was heard, together with the loud splintering of a plateglass window. From 12.30 to 1 o'clock the fire raged fiercely, devouring everything within contact. It was only by the fine work of the brigade that it did not spread to the nearby buildings. Had the wind been in the opposite direction the structures at the rear would almost certainly have been burnt. As it was, the fire was confined to the four walls of the great building, the intense heat as it fed on the wooden floors twisting iron girders and valuable cars into shapeless masses. At 1 o'clock it was apparent to all that the fire was safe. Everything but the bare walls was doomed. The spectacle when the fire was at its height was one never to be forgotten. Towering above the buildings nearby the great square block of flames lit up the surroundings with a glare like that of day, while showers of sparks and burning embers flew from the blazing roof. The immense streams of water hurled at the structure by the firemen seemed futile against such a fiery furnace, the flames appearing to increase rather than diminish, but slowly the hoses began to conquer the fiend. By 2 o'clock the inferno had begun to die down. Throughout the morning firemen played their hoses on the smouldering debris, water dripped from the girders and walls, and policemen had a busy time directing traffic and checking inquisitive sightseers, who threatened to interfere with the work of the brigade.

### Early on Scene

Constables Parkinson and Holloway were the first police officers on the scene. "We were near Light square when we noticed the blaze about 11.15 o'clock," said Constable Parkinson, "so we hurried down Currie street. We found that the alarm had been given by a civilian, so we assisted in removing some motor cars and furniture from the showroom. "The brigade arrived a few moments later, and immediately got to work. We found there were more motors on the ground floor at the rear, and groped our way to them. The flames seemed to be on a floor above. With electric torches and from the glare of the fire we could see nearly a dozen cars, some beautiful ones, including a Cadillac. With the civilians we were about to open the large doors to get them out when an officer of the brigade stopped us. They were afraid that the opening of the doors would create a draught that would add to the fury of the fire, so we were reluctantly compelled to leave the machines. The smoke was getting very bad when we emerged." Other officers were soon on the scene, and under Inspector Hannan the night watch did much to assist the brigade in its fight with the flames by keeping the street clear. Several mounted troopers kept the crowd back.

### No Danger

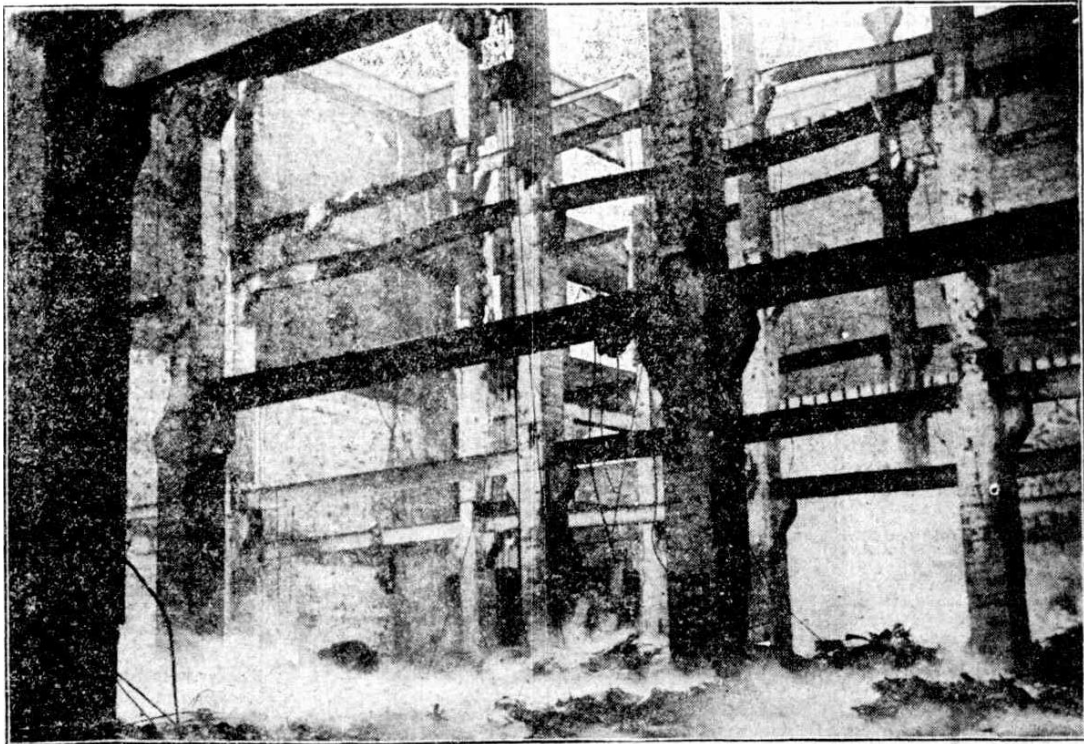
Although the inside walls bear striking evidence of the fire by cracks, and protuberances, no fears are entertained of any part of the building falling. Through the greater part of the day Currie street was crowded with people, some of whom pushed their way along Gilles arcade to secure a better view, and the police officers on duty had a busy time regulating the traffic. Inspector Mattin and Sgts. Naylor and Latimer were in charge near the building, and had a difficult task to keep people from going too close to the ruins. The wall abutting Gilles arcade, which was subjected to the extreme heat of the fire, upon inspection this morning appeared to be almost as firm as before.

### £83,500 in Insurance

H. C. Richards Limited had insured with the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation Limited. "The amount of their insurances," said Mr. Leslie K. McDonald (manager of the corporation) this morning, "was £83,500, of which sum £60,000 was placed on the building itself. Other cars are insured for individual owners, but advice concerning these is not yet complete." Mr. McDonald stated that the property of other tenants in the building was insured, but with various companies. The House of Richards was not insured direct with any other firm, although several insurance companies in Adelaide are interested in view of the fact that they hold small policies on property for other tenants in the building.

### Willing Helpers

From the Crown Hotel opposite Richards Buildings several men were among the first to enter the burning structure. These were Messrs. K. Lockett, H. Panton, J. Mullins, and J. Kelly. Describing his experience Mr. Lockett said:—"We could see the flames at the rear of the premises, so we set about rescuing what was accessible from the street. Six new cars were displayed in the showroom, and these had our first attention. One only had 'juice' in its tank, so we drove it out and pushed the rest across the road. Furniture was next seized, and as we had no one to direct us we took it at random, and dumped it out of harm's way. "Up a short stairway from the showroom were the offices of H. C. Richards, Limited, and from them we got a lot of gear, including a weighty safe, but the heat got unbearable and we had to cease work there. "Mr. Panton had an office on one of the upper floors, and with him I went up to try and break in and rescue some of the papers," continued Mr. Lockett, "but when we climbed up the stairs we found the smoke was so suffocating that it drove us back, so we retreated to the street. Nothing was saved from any of the other offices."



FIRE-RAVISHED REMAINS OF MAGNIFICENT BUILDING COMPLETED FOR H. C. RICHARDS LIMITED THREE YEARS AGO. Photo by R. E. Collett

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

## GREAT FIRE IN ADELAIDE

Story of Disastrous Outbreak (Continued from page 1)

### List of Tenants

In addition to H. C. Richards, Limited, situated in the building were the following tenants, all of whom suffered loss of furniture and office fittings:— FIRST FLOOR Corona Pastoral Company, Limited. Weinteriga Pastoral Company, Limited. Yancannia Pastoral Company, Proprietary, Limited. Winsino and Elsinora Pastoral Company, Proprietary, Limited. Momba Pastoral Company. Lake Elder Pastoral Company. Morden Proprietary, Limited. Crown Pastoral Company. Peake Pastoral Company. Sir Sidney Kidman. Glenroy Pastoral Company. Sydney D. Reid, secretary. Yeeda Pastoral Company. Isdell Pastoral Company. Witchelina Pastoral Company. Bootra Pastoral Company. V. H. Gooch, accountant. Hogarth & Edwards.

SECOND FLOOR Charles E. Blanks, Limited, advertising directors. Castle Salt Co-operative Company. Fischer, Copley, & McLachlan. J. Kingdon & Company. F. W. Hancock & Company. C. E. Stamp. L. A. Morice. Adelaide Stock and Station Journal, South Australian Motor. Commonwealth Agricultural Service Engineers. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Perry Engineering Company. Gibson Battle Proprietary. Mechanical Supplies. H. Chas. Thomas. W. H. O'Flaherty. Texas Company. Aspro Nicholas Proprietary, Limited. Crowe & Newcombe. Hume Pipe Company. Automobile Insurance Company.

THIRD FLOOR Soldier Settlement Department. Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

BASEMENT Wentworth Tea and Luncheon Rooms (Miss Willmott).

Several of the leases held by tenants expired this year, having been taken for only a three years' term. They were renewed recently. The offices of the above firms were completely

guttled with the rest of the building, and only in a few cases will anything be rescued from the wreckage. The basement did not suffer to the same extent, but the debris from overhead completely buried the entrance, thus checking any opportunity of estimating the damage in that vicinity. The basement was solely occupied by Miss Willmott (proprietress of the Wentworth Tea and Luncheon Rooms), a popular resort for business men. Castle Salt Company, which occupied two large offices in the building, is hopeful of recovering something from the ruins. They had three large safes installed, one of them being a Simpson fireproof, and they expect that all their documents will be found intact.



HEEDLESS OF FALLING RUINS FIREMAN OPERATES AMONG TWISTED MOTOR CHASSIS.

Photo by R. E. Collett

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 12 November 1924, page 10***

#### THE CURRIE STREET FIRE.

ONLY FOUR OUTER WALLS REMAINING. SERIOUS LOSSES TO MANY TENANTS.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SUFFER BADLY.

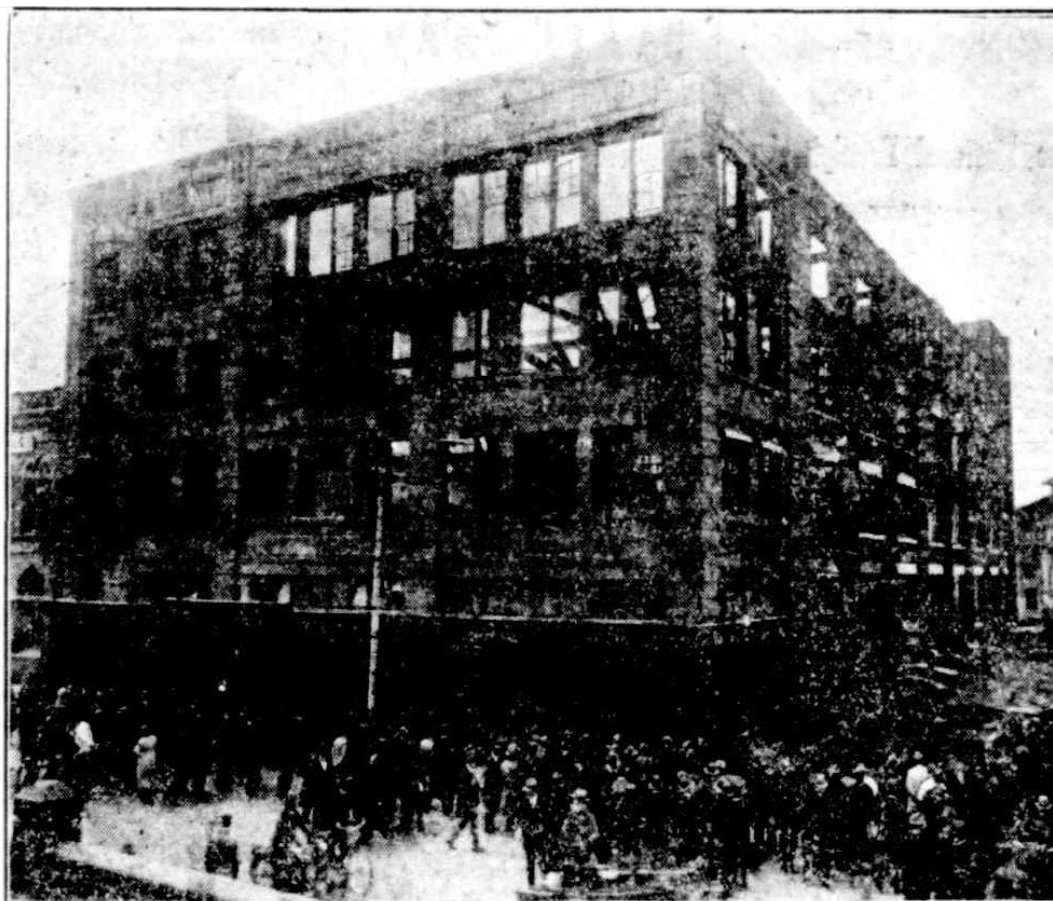
What on Monday morning was one of the most imposing edifices in Currie street presented a very different spectacle on Tuesday morning. All that was then left of Richards Buildings was

the four outer walls and the concrete pillars and rolled steel joists which had supported the floors. For the rest a smouldering chaos of twisted shapes and blackened forms, with here and there the charred remains of a motor car. Some idea of the intensity of the heat which must have been generated when the conflagration was at its height may be gauged by the fact that many of the massive cross beams which spanned the pillars supporting the floors were twisted and bent as though they had been of cardboard. Jets of water streamed from a number of hose lines manned by the firemen among the still smouldering debris. Throughout the day a large number of spectators gathered in Currie street in the vicinity of the wrecked building, and in Gilles Arcade, which is off Currie street, on the western side of the building. A staff of police kept the onlookers at a distance from the danger zone.

A remarkable feature of the occurrence is the rapidity with which the interior of the building was consumed, and in that respect it seems most fortunate that the outbreak did not occur during the daytime. Had it done so, it is almost certain that there would have been at least some casualties, if not fatalities to one or other of the 500 occupants of the building. While exteriorly the erection was a conspicuous feature of Currie street architecture, and presented a comparatively massive and dignified appearance, it would appear that its interior construction was not exactly ideal from the standpoint of fire immunity.

#### Constructional Details.

The building was of comparatively recent construction, having been completed towards the latter end of 1921. Mr. E. H. McMichael was the architect, and the erection embodied four floors and a basement. There was a frontage to Currie street of 96 ft. 9 in., with a depth of 212 ft. 6 in. The basement measured 96 ft. 9 in. x 41 ft., and there was approximately 80,000 square feet of floor space. The roof was flat. The outer walls were of brick, which varied in thickness according to height, the pillars on the western wall on the ground floor having a thickness of 2 ft. 7½ inches. The inside walls and floors were supported on concrete columns, spanned by rolled steel beams, which in turn supported the joists and flooring of wood. The roof construction was similar to that of the floors. The building cost between £50,000 and £60,000. The offices of H. C. Richards, Limited, were located on a landing between the ground floor and the first floor. A member of the office staff of the firm stated on Tuesday morning that he considered much of the office furniture and many of the motor cars might have been saved on Monday night had the employees been allowed by the firemen to enter the building. The fire, it is assumed, started in a machine shop on the ground floor at the rear of the building. A blacksmith's forge is located in this part of the building, and the fire, it is said, was supposed to have been extinguished at 5 o'clock on Monday afternoon. Apparently a spark of flame was left in the charcoal, and, fanned by the strong wind which prevailed in the afternoon and evening, gradually spread to inflammable materials and eventually ignited the whole building. Mr. H. C. Richards was in his office, during the early part of the evening.



The gaunt and spectral appearance presented by Richards Buildings on Tuesday morning.  
The spectators viewing with awe, the havoc wrought.

#### THE INSURANCES.

As usual, where a big risk is involved, the insurances are well spread, the practice being for most companies to under-write a proportion of the risk. Details of reinsurance are not, however, made public. Mr. Leslie K. McDonald, manager in Adelaide of the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation, Limited, stated on Tuesday that his company had effected the insurances with H. C. Richards, Limited, for a total of £83,500, of which £60,000 was on the building. He added, "There are motor cars separately insured for individual owners, but of which advices have not yet been completed. In addition, there are the contents of the various offices in the building, in the names of other insurance companies, and in which we are not largely interested. Allowing for these, the total insurances involved are £100,000. That figure will be found to be well within the mark when the whole position has been cleaned up."

#### THE TENANTS' LOSSES.

##### Soldiers' Settlements' Department.

Apart from the firm of H. C. Richards, Limited, perhaps the heaviest losses are those of the Soldiers' Settlements' Department, which employs about 200 officers and typistes. All the records of this large department, which controls the advances to the soldiers placed on the Murray irrigation blocks and farms all over the State, are probably destroyed. Many of the records were kept on the card system, and the containers and their contents must have gone up in smoke. It is thought, however, that the ledgers which were placed in the strong room, have withstood the flames. The officers are most concerned as to the fate of the cash book, which contains original entries representing over £2,000,000. If this book is lost the accounts of the departments will be in chaos. It would be a greater loss than the ledgers, as the original

vouchers are scheduled in the State Audit Office, and the ledgers could be re-written. The building branch of the Soldiers' Settlement Department, which is under the control of Mr. G. Lane, will be dislocated for a considerable time, and many hundreds of pounds' worth of plans, specifications, contracts, and so forth, have been burnt. The department hopes that none of the workmen engaged in the construction of soldiers' homes along the Murray and other places will be put off in consequence of the fire. Many of the buildings and the specifications are standardised, and it is thought that fresh sets can be made from plans and documents already in use. Although the department possesses several motor cars and motor cycles, fortunately only one power cycle happened to be in the building.

A hurried conference of the heads of branches of the Soldiers' Settlement Department was held at the Lands and Surveys Office at 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning, to make arrangements for carrying on the departmental work. The Secretary for Lands (Mr. P. S. Messent) subsequently stated that the ordinary routine of the department would be resumed at the earliest possible moment. Arrangements were already in hand to obtain temporary quarters, and as soon as they were decided upon, an announcement would be made in the daily papers. In the meantime all enquiries regarding soldier settlement would be answered at the Lands and Surveys Office in the old Government offices, opposite the General Post Office. It was hoped that the department would continue its operations within a few days.

#### Motor Registration Records.

Earlier in the year the Inspector General of Hospitals (Dr. B. H. Morris) was one of the tenants. He and his large staff and valuable records removed to Martin Building, Rundle street, on September 1, after having occupied quarters in Richards Building almost since its completion. The Government Motor vehicles Department, under the Registrar (Mr. P. H. Wells) moved into the rooms vacated by the Hospitals Department early in September, and in all probability the whole of their valuable documents and books dealing with the registration of nearly 40,000 motor cars, and almost similar number of motor cycles, are lost. The Registrar of motor vehicles has secured temporary offices for the department in the Destitute Building, Kintore avenue.

#### The Wentworth Cafe.

Great sympathy is felt for Miss A. E. Willmott, the proprietress of the Wentworth Cafe, which was located in the basement. Miss Wentworth's first intimation of the disaster was on opening her newspaper on Tuesday morning. Mr. H. C. Richards, although himself, the greatest loser as the result of the fire, took an early opportunity to express his deep sympathy for Miss Willmott, who had apparently placed most of her resources into the Wentworth to make it one of the most up-to-date cafes in the city. She had recently installed an expensive piano, and laid a handsome carpet on the floor, valued at about 100 guineas. The north-east corner of the building in which the cafe is situated suffered less from the fire than other portions, and it is expected that under the smouldering ruins some of her property, such as cutlery, silverware, china, ornaments, and so on may be intact, or in a fit condition to salvage. The police were given special instructions to see that no pilfering took place in that corner.

#### Hume Pipe Company.

The offices of the Hume Pipe Company (Australia), Limited, were situated on the ground floor, and the complete loss of their records and office equipment must result at least in very serious disruption in the firm's activities. Questioned on Tuesday morning as to the probable effect of the fire on the company's local operations, Mr. E. J. Hume said he was not in a position to give any details, and could not do so until he had heard from the head office in Melbourne.

#### Other Tenants.

Heavy loss was suffered by Mr. L. A. Morice, public accountant, and editor of The Stock and Station Journal and The South Australian Motor. His offices were situated on the second floor,

and card indices containing over 15,000 records of subscribers were consumed by the flames. Luckily, however, ledgers and other books of account were placed in the safes on the previous night, and he hopes that they may have been preserved. Messrs. Gibson, Battle, & Co. (Melbourne) Proprietary, Limited, had a branch office in the building in charge of Mr. E. R. N. Hayes, and a large number of samples of machinery parts, catalogues, and so on have been destroyed. He has wired to Melbourne for instructions. Sir Sidney Kidman's office, which until recently was in Verco Buildings, on North terrace, was located on the first floor of the destroyed building. Other tenants were Mr. W. H. Christophers, secretary of the Automobile Association, Messrs. Hogarth & Edwards, auctioneers; Mr. W. H. Gooch, accountant; the Castle Salt Co-operative Company, Limited, of which Mr. C. Allen is secretary; Messrs. Fischer, Copley, and McLachlan, stock and station agents; J. Kingdon & Co., stock salesmen; F. W. Hancock & Co., grain merchants; C. E. Stamp artist; C. E. Blanks, Limited, advertising contractors; Perry Engineering Company; H. C. Thomas, public accountant; W. H. O'Flaherty, public accountant; the Texas Company of Australia, Limited; W. H. Langsford & Co.; Crowe & Newcombe; Commonwealth Agricultural Service Engineers, Limited; Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; Mechanical Supplies, Limited; Aspro Nicholas Proprietary, Limited.

#### A Narrow Escape.

Mr. H. Marsden, the caretaker, Miss C. Hendon (his sister-in-law), and Mrs. C. A. Smith, cleaner of the offices of the Soldiers' Settlement Department, occupied rooms on the second floor of the building. Miss Hendon was awakened by the smoke in her room at 11.15, and she aroused the other two. Mr. Marsden seized a fire extinguisher, but as he was unable to get near the seat of the flames, he decided to get out of the building while he could. He and the two women made their way, clad only in night attire and coats, through the smoke towards the front of the building, and got down safely to the ground floor, and into the street. Both women were affected by their thrilling experience, and were subsequently cared for at a friend's house in North Adelaide. Mr. Marsden stated on Tuesday that he had lost everything in the way of furniture, none of which was insured. After his escape the caretaker assisted in saving the furniture in the firm's office.

#### THE FIRE BRIGADE.

An inspection of the fire was made by Chief Officer Dickie and Deputy Chief Officer Cooper at 12 o'clock, and the latter reported that operations were progressing satisfactorily. The firemen were engaged in cooling down the debris with hoses, and it was anticipated that the embers would be entirely extinguished during the day. The call to the fire was received over the telephone by the headquarters of the brigade, Wakefield street, at 11.23 p.m. on Monday, and two motor pumps, a motor ladder, hose carriages, and salvage van proceeded to the site. The brigades from Norwood, Unley, Thebarton, and North Adelaide joined in the work, and altogether there were nearly 50 firemen concentrated on the job. Operations were under the control of Supt. Dickie. At 4 a.m. the main body of the men returned to their respective stations, to make up their appliances and change into dry clothes. Twelve men remained on duty at the scene of the fire until 8 o'clock, when they were relieved by eight other firemen. This number was further reduced to four at 1 o'clock.

#### THE HOUSE OF RICHARDS.

The following is culled from an article descriptive of the phenomenal growth of the firm of H C. Richards, Limited, which appeared in The Register at the latter end of last year:— Mr. H. C. Richards is a man of many achievements, who has done much for the commercial, industrial, political, and municipal interests of the city. He is recognised as one of the leading men in the motor industry throughout the Commonwealth, and his recent trip round the world placed him in possession of much useful knowledge and information. In the State House of Assembly he represented Sturt for three years, and in 1921 became Mayor of Unley. He has been re-elected unopposed for the last two years.

#### Early Days.

The house of Richards was founded 19 years ago, then being located in an unpretentious building with a single office of small proportions in Pirie street. From that small desk he has lifted his business until it ranks as one of the largest motor car businesses in Australia. By April, 1905, the business had grown to such an extent that Mr. Richards was forced to move to a single story building 30 ft. x 60 ft. in Currie street. The business continued to increase, and in August, 1906, he again removed to Blyth street, leasing the large premises which had been built for the Osborne Machinery Company. In 1912 he purchased the freehold of the Blyth street premises, and in the following year, foreseeing the big future of the motor industry, he secured the agency for this State of the Oakland car. Realizing that in order to properly market motor cars, a showroom was necessary. Mr. Richards in September, 1916, secured the lease of a showroom and office fronting on Hindley street and adjoining the Blyth street premises at the rear.

#### Limited Company Formed.

In June, 1913, three additional stories were added to the rear of the Blyth street building, and in 1919 Mr. Richards disposed of the greater portion of the farm machinery department, retaining the farm tractors and roadmaking machinery portion. In July of the same year he decided to convert the business into a limited company, and his brother, Mr. A. J. Richards, who had been working with him for some time was admitted to the firm. Mr. W. E. Richards, another brother, was also admitted, and the firm thus became "H. C. Richards, Limited." Subsequently the board of directors was increased by the inclusion of Mr. C. B. Nicholson. The motor car portion demanded more and more attention, as further sales were made, and in order to give an increased service to users of the Oakland, Wolseley, and Cadillac cars, the latter two agencies being recent acquisitions, they secured in 1920 the freehold of the premises which Mr. Richards had occupied in 1905 in Currie street. And whereas the original office in Currie street occupied a space of 30 ft. x 60 ft. the free-hold covered an area of half a city acre.

#### The New Buildings.

The new Richards Buildings was undoubtedly one of the finest houses of its kind in Australia, beauty, dignity, and individuality being its outstanding characteristics.

It compared favourably with many, and indeed surpassed some, of the buildings of its kind in America. The showroom was one of the chief features. Directly in the centre and facing the entrance was a grand stairway of marble leading to a mezzanine floor in which were located the offices of the sales and publicity departments and the general offices and those of the directors of the company. The house of Richards controlled some of the most exclusive motor car agencies in the world, including the Oakland, Cadillac, Durant, and Rugby. A secondhand car department was also established, and other agencies included. Fowler tractors and road rollers, which are used by practically every municipality in the State. The most recent agency to be secured was that of the G.M.C. truck.



Fireman playing a powerful water jet on to the smouldering debris. The photo incidentally gives a vivid idea of the outer shell and the columns, the sole remaining evidences of the handsome construction that was once Richards Buildings.



A comprehensive idea is here conveyed of the appearance of the interior of Richards' Buildings on Tuesday morning. The rolled steel I beams between the columns were buckled and twisted, indicating the phenomenal heat generated by the blaze. The completeness of the havoc and ruin wrought by the fire is also graphically illustrated.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE.**

We ask our many customers to bear with us for a few days in view of the

**FIRE**

which demolished our City Premises on Monday night.

**ASSEMBLY PLANT INTACT.**

Our Assembly Plant is still intact, and is operating as usual. Therefore

**WE CAN DELIVER ALL ORDERS**

IN HAND FROM STOCK AS USUAL

and fulfil any new orders which may be placed within a few weeks. For the present business is being conducted in our Used Car Department, in Gilles Lane, at side of Richards Buildings.

**H. C. RICHARDS LTD.**

Distributors of Rugby, Durant, Oakland, Cadillac Cars, and G.M.C. Trucks.

CURRIE STREET — — — — ADELAIDE.

*The Register Wed 12 Nov 1924 page 10 - Richards Ad*

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Saturday 15 November 1924, page 7**

Small City Fire

Shortly after 4 o'clock this morning the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to Mrs. L. Young's cigar shop in King William street. The fire, which was confined to the rear portion of the premises, was quickly extinguished. The damage was slight. Constable Wilson gave the alarm.

**Saturday Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1929), Saturday 15 November 1924, page 1**

FIRE IN CITY TOBACCONIST'S SHOP.

SLIGHT DAMAGE DONE.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call from the King William street, Adelaide, alarm at about 4.5 o'clock this morning. Three engines—first and second motors and a motor pump—were sent out and it was found that the tobacconist shop of Mrs. L. Young, in King William street was ablaze. The fire was soon extinguished. Slight damage was done to tobacco and other goods at the rear of the shop which was very closely packed. No reason has been given for the origin of the blaze.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 18 November 1924, page 11**

RICHARDS FIRE

Coroner's Enquiry Begun

SURPRISE ADJOURNMENT

After having closely questioned several witnesses at the enquiry today concerning the fire that destroyed Richards Building, in Currie street on November 10, Dr. Ramsay Smith unexpectedly adjourned the proceedings until Thursday in order to obtain additional evidence. The City Coroner directed many questions to officers of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade regarding the materials that had been used in the construction of the building and the nature of the fire appliances that had been on the premises. In adjourning the enquiry the Coroner said that much time had been devoted to questions which some people might think had little to do with the question of the fire. But the knowledge that an inquest might be held tended to keep property owners up to the mark in the matter of fire prevention, fire extinction, and life-saving appliances. The evidence at an inquest also often led a jury (if there were one) to make useful suggestions as to means to be taken to prevent fires. From that point of view he had been taking evidence today, and certain things had transpired that he thought it would be advisable to adjourn the enquiry and obtain additional evidence. Mr. E. E. Cleland, K.C., watched the proceedings on behalf of H. C. Richards Limited, and Mr. R. M. Steele represented a group of insurance companies. William Edward John Standish, chief clerk for H. C. Richards Limited, said that on the evening of the fire he re-turned to the building shortly before 7 o'clock and remained there until about 10. Mr. M. C. King, a clerk, was with witness, but he left about 9. When witness left the buildings there was no sign of fire. Albert Cottell, secretary to Commonwealth Agricultural Service Engineers, said that his company was located in Richards Buildings. On the night of the fire he was in the office until about two minutes to 11. His room was next to that of the caretaker's on the second floor. Two other officers of the company were with the witness that evening, and one of them left with him. He did not see anyone else in the building when he left.

BRIGADE SUMMONED

Miss Florence Kelly, Crown Hotel, Currie street, said that she noticed flames in the first floor as she was returning to the hotel after 11 o'clock. When she first noticed the fire it was confined to the first floor. She saw no one about, so ran into the hotel, and one of the

boarders rang for the brigade. Constance B. Hendon, caretaker's assistant at Richards, Limited, told the Coroner that after she went to bed at 10.30 o'clock on the night of the fire she awoke and smelt something burning. She immediately spoke to Mrs. Smith, who was with her, and asked her if she could smell burning. Mrs. Smith said that she could not. Witness then got up, opened her door on the second floor, and saw smoke in the passage. She shouted out to Marsden, the caretaker. Marsden had been sleeping on the roof, and when he came down he told witness and Mrs. Smith that they would have to get out. They reached the ground floor by the lift, opened the front door, and got to the street. The caretaker left the building two or three minutes later. Witness said that she did not have to pass through much smoke to reach the street. Formal evidence was tendered by Thomas B. Younger, manager of the Texas Company; Amy E. Willmott, who was the proprietress of the tea rooms in the basement of the Richards Buildings; and Michael F. Norton, service manager, H. C. Richards, Limited

#### CARETAKER AROUSED

Harry Marsden, caretaker of Richards Buildings, said that he was sleeping in the lift on the roof of the building on the night of the fire. Before going to bed at 10.30 he made an inspection of the building and found everything in order. After he had been awakened at about 10 minutes past 11 he noticed smoke coming from the floor below. He helped the two women into the lift, and saw them safely out of the building, and returned to the second floor. He secured a hand fire extinguisher next the lift, but the fire had too great a hold for him to use it. There were several other fire extinguishers, and three fire hoses on the same floor. Henry Thomas Sayers, station officer at Metropolitan Fire Brigade, said that there had been 38 chemical fire extinguishers in Richards Buildings. They had been examined by officers of the Fire Brigade last August, and were found to be in good order. John Edward Dickie, chief officer of the Fire Brigade, said that the amount of woodwork used in the construction of the building had contributed to the spread of the fire. He considered that the 38 chemical fire extinguishers that had been on the premises were sufficient protection against fire if brought into use early.

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 20 November 1924, page 1***

#### HOUSE OF RICHARDS FIRE

Evidence by Tenants and Firemen

#### CORONER WILL DELIVER FINDING ON MONDAY

Station Officer Sayers, of the Adelaide Fire Brigade, giving evidence at the resumed inquest into the cause of the fire which destroyed Richards Buildings, said that "two staircases, each about four feet six inches wide, would not provide sufficient exit for about 115 persons on the top floor. Had there been 300 people in the building at the time of the arrival of the brigade few would have had a chance of being saved. Dr. Ramsay Smith (City Coroner) will deliver his finding at 10 o'clock on Monday.

Mr. E. E. Cleland, K.C., represented Mr. H. C. Richards (governing director of H. C. Richards, Limited), and Mr. R. M. Steele appeared for the insurance companies concerned. Flames were leaping out of the third window from the southern end and on the first floor of the building, said Constable George E. Shepherd, when he was called by cries of bystanders to the spot at 11.15 p.m. Not much of the building was then on fire so far as he could see, but the flames spread rapidly, and by the time the fire brigade arrived, which was within three or four minutes, a large portion of the southern end of the building was alight. Walter J. M. Sedgely, draftsman, of the Adelaide City Council, said that he received plans of Richards Buildings, and he and Mr. J. R. Richardson (building surveyor) examined them under the Building Act of 1881. The Coroner—Are there any other Acts dealing with building plans. Witness—A section of the Municipal Corporations Act and the Health Act, but the City Council considers plans only in connection with the Building Act.

Did you consider them in connection with the Municipal Corporations Act?— I don't remember. Well, I wish you would remember. It is important. Was it found necessary to make any recommendation in connection with the plans before they were approved?—Yes. There was a recommendation regarding the health requirements before the plans were approved by the Health Board. Witness said a detail plan of the concrete work was submitted and examined by the building surveyor, who approved. Council Inspections The Coroner—Were any inspections made on behalf of the council of the building during the course of its erection. —Yes. The building surveyor inspected it to see that it was in accordance with the Building Act and the plans approved. More than half a dozen inspections would have been made. Is there any record of the inspections? —No. Witness said he inspected the building when concrete partitions were being erected. He suggested to Mr. Richards that it would be advisable to run the concrete partitions right through the floor, so that in the event of the fire the fire would not spread from one room to another. Mr. Richards agreed that it was a good idea. Was that suggestion to bring the building in accordance with the plan or to make it more than fireproof?—I don't know. If it had not been in the original plan would it have been compulsory for him to adopt it?—No. Looking at the plans, witness said that no concrete portions were shown. Do you know whether your suggestion was adopted?—I was told by the contractor that it was being done. Witness said the ceilings were made of fibrous plaster. According to the Act the material should be incombustible. Have you seen evidences of the burning of that material?—Yes, it has been destroyed. The Coroner—I shall have to interpret the word incombustible in the ordinary English and legal meaning. I shall have to find whether the material is capable of taking fire and burning. Witness said the building surveyor considered fibrous plaster was incombustible.

#### Safety Exits

Asked whether he inspected the building from the point of view of safety exits and appliances, witness said he did not. He said the Building Act did not refer to that. If the concrete partitions had been built right through the floor as he had suggested he did not think they would have prevented the fire. Mr. Cleland—Could a building according to those plans and specifications be erected now in view of the new Building Act?—No.

Eric H. McMichael, architect, said he prepared the plans for Richards Buildings. The suggestion was made by Mr. Sedgley that the concrete partitions be carried right through the floors, and that was done. Dealing with the rapid spread of the fire, he said the heat would twist the iron girders sufficiently to make part of the building collapse. Heavy furniture, particularly safes, falling from one floor would break through the floors below. The Coroner—What would prevent that?—Reinforced concrete floors. Francis Harry Wells (Registrar of Motor Vehicles) said that he had five rooms on the third floor of Richards Buildings. The Architect-in-Chief chose the rooms for him. Witness told members of the staff that if a fire occurred in the daytime, starting on the ground floor, they would never get out. They smelled smoke one day, and all ran out into the corridors. The Coroner—You thought it was dangerous?—There were no fire escapes. What hope was there of getting down stairs? Witness said there was no hope at all. There was a drop of about 30 ft. from the windows of his offices. He thought the building would collapse if it caught fire. He had been in the building only a little more than two months and was arranging with the Architect-in-Chief to get other offices. That was from the point of view of convenience to the public. Of his two safes, the big one was intact, and the contents of the small one were charred. He lost personal property to the value of about £50, and Government property to the value of £300 was destroyed, in addition to all records since 1907. The records were necessary for the performance of the work of the department. Safety Previously Discussed John L. S. Bice (Superintendent and Chief Inspector of the Soldier Settlement Department), tenant of the top floor, said he discussed the question of the safety of the building about 12 months ago with the senior clerk. George E. Lane (building inspector of the Soldier Settlement Department) said that he considered the floors of the building should have been fireproof. The material of which the partitions were constructed was fireproof. He thought the open spaces on each floor had contributed to the spread of the fire. He had been doubtful of the safety of the building. Alfred

E. Simpson (Architect-in-Chief) said that he had had no complaints as to the safety of the building. As it had been erected by a reputable architect and passed by the City Council he considered it a business proposition to take the offices. Henry T. Sayers (station officer of the Adelaide Fire Brigade) said the flames had a clean sweep from floor to floor. Some of the partitions fell. He saw all the floors collapse. Two staircases each about four feet six inches wide would not provide sufficient exit for about 115 persons on the top floor. The staircase being wooden, he would consider the position dangerous. Had there been 300 people in the building at the time of the arrival of the brigade, few would have had a chance of being saved. From a fireman's point of view he would call the building dangerous from the point of view of lifesaving.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 20 November 1924, page 13**

Fire Extinguished

Rubbish on the roof of outhouses at the rear of Harrington's Limited, photographic supplies, and Home Recreations (Eddy's) Limited, Appolo place, off King William street, caught alight early this afternoon. The flames were spreading rapidly when the metropolitan brigade arrived in response to a call. The firemen, however, promptly extinguished the blaze.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Friday 21 November 1924, page 14**

A MYSTERIOUS FIRE.

BULK STORE ALIGHT.

A fire occurred mysteriously in the rear corner of Messrs. Newton, McLaren's bulk store, in Tatham-street, off Weymouth-street, at about 9 a.m. yesterday. There was no one in the store at the time and all the doors were locked. A neighbor noticed smoke issuing from a window at the corner of the building in which the gas meter is situated. Fortunately Newton & McLaren have a workshop near the bulk store and the employes were able to gain access to the building, and with the aid of two fire extinguishers they kept the fire in check until the Fire Brigade arrived. The gas from the main was cut off, and the outbreak was quickly extinguished without having caused much damage. Mr. D. E. McLaren (managing director), after investigating the cause of the outbreak, said as there was no one in the building he could only assume that the pipe connecting the gasometer with the main must have been leaking. He estimated the damage at less than £20.

**Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 22 November 1924, page 10**

CITY BLAZE

BRIGADE'S FINE SAVE

Motor Lorries Damaged

A magnificent save by the Adelaide Fire Brigade was achieved this afternoon at a wood and iron structure owned by Burt & Timms, contractors, at the corner of Rose street and West terrace. At 2.50 the fire alarm was given at Gray street, Adelaide, and within a few minutes the brigade was on the spot. The fire had not obtained a good hold, but there was great danger owing to the presence of wood and petrol. About 15 motor lorries were kept in the building, and two of these were already burning when the brigade arrived. The fire was extending rapidly when the first hose started, and but for the persistence of the firemen it might have spread with serious results. Adjoining the building in which the fire started is a woodyard, in which was stacked 300 to 400 tons of wood. The brigade prevented the spread of the fire to this yard, although many of the rafters in the building owned by Burt and Timms caught alight before the flames could be checked. There was a good quantity of oil and petrol on the premises, but this was untouched. Only slight damage was done to the building, as within 20 minutes of receiving the call the brigade had the blaze right out. The two lorries

which caught alight were damaged, but the others were barely touched. It is not known how the fire started.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 24 November 1924, page 11**

#### MOTOR GARAGE ON FIRE.

Just before 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon the Adelaide Fire Brigade received a call from Gray-street, in the west of the city. The brigade made a quick response and found a fire had started in Messrs. Burt & Timms' motor garage, at the corner of Rose-street and West-terrace. The garage is an old building constructed of wood and iron and 15 or 16 motor tractors were tightly packed in. When the brigade arrived the fire had just reached the rafters. Two tractors were damaged, the woodwork being nearly all burnt. A woodyard owned by Messrs. A. & J. Fimeri, with stacks of between five and six hundred tons of wood, adjoined the garage, and several horses were also stabled there. The fire was rapidly brought under control, though the closely packed tractors impeded the work of the firemen. It is thought that a back fire from one of the tractors as it was being stalled caused the blaze.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 25 November 1924, page 10**

#### WAGES OF FIREMEN

Four-Guinea Minimum

#### DANGERS OF FIRE FIGHTING

Firemen throughout the State in the service of the Fire Brigades Board were awarded a minimum wage of £4 4/ a week of seven days by Dr. T. Hewitson (Deputy President) in the Industrial Court today. In order that all grades may benefit by the increase represented by the minimum the award provides for a rise of 2/ a week uniformly through the scale, so that the wage of first-grade senior firemen will be £5 5/ and that of second grade senior firemen £4 18/. Firemen will be reclassified according to length of service. Mr. A. W. Piper, K.C., with Mr. E. Frinsdorf (chairman of the Fire Brigades Board) appeared for the board, and Mr. F. K. Nieass (secretary of the Government Workers' Association) represented the men. His Honor pointed out that the workers in the fire fighting industry were producers, not of material wealth, but of the utility which their services represented. The assessment of the value of that utility was impracticable. The police force had been referred to as supplying a standard for the purpose of enquiry. But a comparison lay only in so far as both services were charged with the protection of property. He mentioned that the range of rates in the other States was from a minimum in South Australia of 11/6 to that in New South Wales of 12/10 a day, and from the maximum of £4 12/6 in Brisbane to £6 in Melbourne. In each State the gradings were dissimilar. His Honor said it would be unbecoming to belittle the danger or the courage with which firemen were faced when occasion arose, but it would be an evil day for the community if there were no heights in life above the level of the market place. Dr. Hewitson refused to provide special rates for firemen doing tradesmen's work. They entered the service, he said, as firemen. If they had desired the benefits of tradesmen's pay it was open to them to follow their trade, but they chose the service presumably for its advantages. As regards the auxiliary men, Dr. Hewitson said he was not prepared to make an award until he had further information. He advised the parties to discuss the matter and he adjourned the case until Tuesday.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 25 November 1924, page 7**

#### RICHARDS BUILDING FIRE.

City Council Accused of Negligence.

Application of Health Act Advocated.

"The evidence does not show how the fire originated, but it shows that from the first floor of the building it spread with great rapidity until the premises were almost completely gutted, such spread being made possible by the structure and the combustible materials of the building; and the evidence further shows that under the provisions of the Acts of Parliament in force the Adelaide City Council had power to prevent the building from being used for the purposes for which it was occupied." This verdict was returned by the City Coroner (Dr. Ramsay Smith) on Monday morning in connection with the recent fire at Richards Building. The verdict of the inquest was delivered at the Education Block, Flinders street. After having reviewed the evidence of witnesses, the Coroner stated that there was no direct evidence of the place, time, or manner of origin of the fire, and speculation would be useless in an enquiry of that sort. The chief interest attached to its extension. The question therefore arose of the cause or causes of the abnormally rapid spread of the fire.

#### Causes of Rapid Spread.

The Chief Officer of Fire Brigades, proceeded the Coroner, had summarized the conditions that had permitted or contributed to the rapid spread of the flames, viz., the fact that the material forming the partitions between the rooms would not stop a fire of high temperature, the amount of woodwork used in construction, the method in which the wood was disposed in the building, the large glass frontage on the ground floor allowing the windows to give increased draught, and the stairways and lifts from one floor to the other not being isolated. That officer had been under the impression that the floors in the building were concrete, and he said that some buildings of that size had fire escapes outside, and that it was desirable to have them. The station officer in giving evidence had said "If there had been, say, 300 people in the building when the brigade arrived, and if things had gone as they did, he thought very few would have been saved; that was considering the structure of the building, the materials, and the appliances. From the fireman's point of view he would not consider that building safe. From the point of view of life saving he would call it dangerous— a high degree of danger." Facts in evidence were that there was no fire alarm in the building, no stated telephone to be used in case of fire, no instructions issued to the caretaker as to procedure in case of fire, and no night watchman on the premises.

#### "Inexcusable Laxity."

The question arose, Dr. Ramsay Smith went on:— "How came it that a building so constructed was allowed to be built and used?" There was no escape from the conclusion that there was inexcusable laxity regarding the principles and details of administration. It was impossible to find any trustworthy official evidence of what structural conditions were finally approved. Further, there was no record of any visit or inspection of the building during the process of construction made by the responsible officer, the building surveyor of the City Council; nor was there any record of a most important alteration in the original plans, viz., the subdivisions made of certain floors. He might note certain other matters given in evidence. Some of the responsible inmates— people in charge of numbers of employes— had been aware of the dangerous nature of the building, and had even made arrangements regarding procedure in case of fire. The quarters for the staff of two Government departments had been selected by the Government Architect-in-Chief, as the responsible housing officer for civil servants, and thus far he was responsible for the Government employes being there. In his evidence he had said that, at the time, they were pressed for offices. He knew that the building had been designed by a reputable architect, and presumably under the ordinary supervision, and he had considered that it would be quite a business proposition, in those circumstances. Those statements smacked of an old-time official trustfulness, or credulity, regarding administration business integrity which might not impossibly be somewhat out of date or out of place in these days.

#### City Council's Position.

"The most important question, of all now arises— How came the City Council to permit the erection of such a building as the one destroyed, or to allow it to continue to be occupied in

the condition it was in at the time the fire occurred?" resumed the Coroner. "The evidence given at this inquest shows that the Adelaide City Council had fixed its attention exclusively on the Building Act of 1881, with out any regard to the Municipal Corporations Act of 1890. And yet that later Act appears to give powers to the council to prevent the erecting or occupying of such a building as the one that has been burned down. Recognising, or assuming, that in the erection of this building the Act of 1881 did not empower him to insist on concrete or other fire-proof or fire-resisting floorings and partitions, the surveyor suggested, at one point during the erection, that a certain amount of concreting of partition walls between the adjacent wooden floorings would tend to prevent the spread of fire. As experience showed that proved to be merely another instance of the ability of responsible authorities to 'strain out the gnat and swallow the camel.' For if the Act under which the building was being erected gave power to withhold approval until the small amount of concreting was done, the same power existed with reference to all such concreting of floors and partitions as appeared necessary or desirable for safety of life. But apart from this Act, there was the Municipal Corporations Act of 1890 which gave, one would think, ample power to the council to make certain that walls, partitions, and ceilings should be efficient in preventing fire from spreading from one room to another. In view of the manner and extent of the spread of the fire in this building it is mere juggling with words to say that the floorings, ceiling, and walls were fire-proof, or non-combustible, or noninflammable—certainly the materials might not take fire from a lucifer or other similar match being applied to them, but the heat they were subjected to was somewhat greater than what would be produced by a good many lucifer matches. In considering this Act I have examined carefully the scientific, legal, and common English meanings and application of the terms I have used."

#### Test Case Advocated.

Proceeding, the Coroner said:—"Another question arises. 'Are there any similar premises in the City of Adelaide equally unprotected against the spread of fire; and if so what power exists to remedy defects if these were built previous to 1923?' The Municipal Corporations Act might be held to be non-applicable if the Council has given permission to use them. The Council might plead that by its own previous actions it is powerless to protect the citizens against risks from fires in such premises. If so, it might be worth while to consider—or even to go to the extent of trying a test case under, an Act that has been in force since 1899— an Act whose provisions, according to the evidence, receives no consideration from the officials or the Council when considering plans or dealing with houses that may be regarded as dangerous in the same sense as the premises that have been destroyed. I refer to the Health Act, 1898. Life, presumably, still is or ought to be of as much account as health. Now according to Act of Parliament, applicable in the City of Adelaide if any dwelling house, factory, or other premises are so constructed as to interfere with the health or well-being of the inmates through dilapidation, contaminated soil, dampness, lack of ventilation, deficiency of lighting or such like, the Council, as a Local Board of Health, can deal with the owner, or occupier in what may be called a summary fashion, by closing the place and for-bidding any one to occupy it until such alterations have been effected as the Local Board may direct. If such procedure is advisable or reasonable in a matter of health, one would think it would be equally so or even more so in matters of life and death. I may point out in this connection that in English legislation any quarry dangerous to the public is in open or uninclosed land with-in 50 yards of a highway or place of public resort, and is not properly fenced to prevent accident, it is to be regarded as a nuisance to be dealt with summarily under the Public Health Act. The term in the South Australian Act corresponding to the English "nuisance" is "insanitary condition," and it has an extremely wide application under that Act. I do not find, even on close critical inspection of similar Acts of Parliament or legal decisions that I am going outside the plain sense of the English language, or that I should be suggesting any interpretation that is contrary to reported authoritative legal decisions, when I point out that an Act of Parliament which, according to the evidence given, has been ignored by the City Council, and its officials should receive some consideration from a legal and administrative point of view. The Health Act "The Health Act has been characterized as drastic in some of its provisions," added Dr.

Ramsay Smith, "but there is an adage to the effect that desperate diseases require desperate remedies—and the unanimous evidence given at this inquest regarding the risks to life of fire in any such building as the one under consideration, has brought to light dangers whose existence would have been deemed incredible in a city community. If a defect of structure which allows too little fresh air for health can be dealt with in a drastic fashion, there is surely some peculiar sophistry in arguing that it is unreasonable to deal in similar fashion with defects of structure that would allow the inmates to be burned to death."

LORD MAYOR RETICENT.

When approached on Monday afternoon regarding the Coroner's statement in the finding on the inflammable nature of the floors in Richards Building that it was clear an Act of Parliament had been ignored by the City Council, the Lord Mayor (Mr. C. R. J. Glover) said he did not wish to comment on the Coroner's conclusions.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Thursday 27 November 1924, page 8**

FIRE BRIGADE EMPLOYEES.

THE AWARD "INADEQUATE."

A meeting of fire brigade employes was held at the head station on Wednesday night, at which all men off duty from the head and out stations attended. The general secretary (Mr. F. K. Nieass) gave a full report of the court proceedings, and after a lengthy discussion the following resolutions were unanimously carried: —(1) That this meeting is of the opinion that the award is inadequate and absolutely contrary to the evidence; (2) that the Board be asked to receive a deputation on Monday next further to discuss the matter; (3) that tradesmen be paid an increase or otherwise ask to be relieved of the responsibilities of their duties; (4) that the Board be asked to agree to extra pay for the motor drivers; (5) that the Board be asked to remove the lavatory to a more suitable position.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 27 November 1924, page 1**

CITY FIRE

Saddler's Shop Guttled

What was described as the Fire Brigade's best save prevented an outbreak in the premises of T. P. Whitbread, saddler and collarmaker, of Rundle street east, from spreading to a large block of buildings, including the East End markets, and doing extensive damage this morning. The Fire Brigade received a call at 1.40 o'clock, and when it arrived at the scene it found that the flames had obtained a good hold. Smoke was belching forth from the shop in dense volumes. The work of the brigade was difficult, as there were only the front and rear entrances to the shop. After about an hour's work the flames were subdued. The shop, which is a two-storied structure, is of wood and iron, and a partition between it and the adjoining premises of T. Judd and Son, who conduct a boot store, was destroyed. Damage was done to the repairing department of the latter place. The flames had also licked the partition separating the workrooms from the main shop, where a heavy Christmas stock was carried. Mr. Whitbread stated that his stock and fittings were insured for nearly £1,000, but the damage greatly exceeded that sum. He had lost a large quantity of harness and fittings. A motor and machinery were badly damaged. The loss sustained by T. Judd & Son was unknown. "The brigade effected a wonderful save," declared Mr. Whitbread. "Considering that it is a wood and iron building, I think that its work was excellent." Judd & Son were also pleased with the work of the brigade, as they were carrying a large Christmas stock, and the fire had entered their premises when the brigade arrived. It was stated that if a strong wind had caught the blaze the brigade would have had little chance of saving the block of buildings owing to the difficulty of getting at the seat of the fire.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Saturday 29 November 1924, page 1**

#### Fire at Grassmere

Scotch thistles in a large paddock at the corner of Bay and South roads, Grassmere, were reported to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade this morning to be on fire. The firemen quickly extinguished the blaze. A fence belonging to the property of Dr. John O'Brien was partly burned, but the firemen with numerous helpers armed with wet bags prevented the flames from igniting a garage owned by Mr. C. W. Lloyd. The garage contained a large supply of benzine.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 29 November 1924, page 17***

#### FIRE IN HALIFAX-STREET.

The fire brigade received a call at 8.30 p.m. on Friday to a house occupied by Mrs. Brown in Halifax-street. A little boy, playing with a lighted candle, had set fire to a wooden bed. The bed and clothing were destroyed.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 29 November 1924, page 48***

#### SMALL FIRE IN CITY.

At about 1 p.m. on November 20 a small fire was noticed on the top of a small out house at the back of Messrs. Harringtons' premises, in Rundle-street. The Fire Brigade were quickly on the spot and the fire was extinguished. It caused practically no damage. Mr. W. S. Corfield (manager of Harringtons) said old linoleum had been stored on top of the outhouse, and might have been set alight by a cigarette end carelessly thrown away.

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Wednesday 3 December 1924, page 2***

#### False Alarm

Receiving a call by telephone at 11.14 this morning, the Adelaide Fire Brigade hurried to Rundle street, where it was thought that there was an outbreak of fire on the top storey of the building occupied by A. Campion. No signs of fire were found.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 4 December 1924, page 12***

#### FIRE IN PLASTER WORKS.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call at 9.45 p.m. on Wednesday to fibre plaster works at Seymour place, city. A shed and contents were slightly damaged, and the fire broke through into a sheet metalwork establishment next door. Damage in the latter place was confined to fittings and a bench.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Thursday 4 December 1924, page 12***

#### FIRE IN FIBROUS PLASTER FACTORY.

About 9.45 p.m. on Wednesday, the fire brigade received a call to premises occupied by Mr. G. D. Wright, a plasterer and modeller, in Seymour-place, off Moore-street, where a quantity of fibre was smouldering. The fire had extended through a wall, and ignited a bench in the workshop of the Austral Sheet Metal Works. The brigade extinguished the outbreak before much damage had been done.

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 4 December 1924, page 13***

#### FIRE IN KING WILLIAM STREET.

#### A Midnight Alarm.

At 12.50 a.m. the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a call to a fire in King William street. On arrival at the premises of the S.A. Radio Company, about five doors north of Hindley street, that establishment was found to be filled with smoke. When the door was burst open the

smoke rolled out in dense volumes, but there were no signs of a blaze. A fireman equipped with a smoke helmet, and a rope fastened to his waist entered the building to explore the situation, while another fireman outside pumped fresh air to him, and a third held the other end of the rope in case of accident. It seemed quite a long time before the investigator announced the probable seat of the fire, and a stream of water was pumped into the building. Meanwhile groups of people in miscellaneous attire, in which pyjamas seemed the ruling fashion, chivvied the firemen with jocose remarks, such as "Strike a match and find the place!" and "What's the matter with the water supply?" Ladders were placed against the verandah and firemen made a careful investigation there, exercising every care to damage the stock as little as possible. When eventually the actual work of extinction was entered upon, it was not long before the fire was under control; and within half an hour all danger of the spread of the flames in a valuable block seemed over.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 5 December 1924, page 13**

KING WILLIAM STREET FIRE.

The fire at the S.A. Radio Company's premises in King William street on Wednesday night did little damage to the building, although a quantity of stock was burned. The stock was insured, but the exact damage has not been ascertained. No theory has been advanced regarding the origin of the fire. Messrs. A. R. Campbell and E. R. Tink, liquidators of the company, paid a high tribute on Thursday to the work of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, which speedily quelled the outbreak. Firemen state that the fire was extremely hard to deal with, because of the quantity and quality of the smoke, which filled the shop and obscured the flames.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 6 December 1924, page 11**

A DAY OF ALARMS.

Fire Brigade Kept Busy.

The metropolitan and suburban fire brigades had a busy time on Friday. The Central Station received three calls to various parts of the city; the Norwood brigade responded to three alarms; and the Unley and Thebarton reels each attended to one outbreak. None of the fires was of a serious nature, and four of the alarms proved groundless. The records for promptness of the various brigade staffs were fully maintained, and in each case the men were able to refute the assertion occasionally overheard that the fire brigades don't do much.

At 1 p.m. the head station, Wakefield street, received a call to a grass fire near to the Mile-End Bridge, adjoining the Roman Catholic Cemetery. The flames had covered a wide area when the brigade arrived, and the use of water was necessitated to prevent their further spread. One minute after having received the latter call, the bell again rang at headquarters, and this time the outbreak was found to be at the S.A. Brewing Company's premises, Hindley street. A wood-and-iron fence was partly destroyed in this fire. The Frome road alarm was visited in answer to a call at 6.14 p.m., but this turned out to be a false alarm.

The Unley Brigade turned out at 7.43 p.m. to the home of Mr. Jackson, at Devon street, Goodwood, where a bed was found alight, and the fire was extinguished with slight damage to the bed and bedding, and the skirting of the room. The call received by the Norwood reel at 7.57 p.m. to Hanover road, Dulwich, was described as a justified false alarm. In this case the person who gave the alarm mistook a rising cloud of dust for a volume of smoke. The Thebarton station also had a peculiar experience. At 9.36 the reel was sent out to the Chemical and Fertilizer Works at Thebarton. There was no fire but the men discovered that a telegraph pole had blown down, causing the shutter to drop in the Thebarton Fire Station—another false alarm.

Garrett's box factory, at Gurr's road, Norwood, developed a harmless fire in a sawdust heap at 10.38 on Friday night. The Norwood men turned out, and performed the work of extinction.

The reel had no sooner returned to the station when it was again called out, this time to William street, Norwood. This proved to be a malicious false alarm.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 11 December 1924, page 10**

#### FIREMEN AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

Station-officer Sayers, Firemen L. A. Fry, and Mr. F. K. Nieass (secretary to the Government Workers' Association) visited the Children's Hospital on Tuesday afternoon, and presented that institution with a cot, in behalf of the officers and the men of the Adelaide Fire Brigade. Mr. Nieass, in officially presenting the cot, stated that the Adelaide firemen wished to express their interest in the infant child of their late comrade, Fireman Greenman, and so had secured the cot. Unfortunately the child had died on the very morning that the cot had been delivered to the head station. The men had unanimously decided to ask the Children's Hospital to accept it as a memorial to the child. Station Officer Sayers and Fireman Fry supported the remarks made. The inscription on the cot reads:—"The Greenman Cot. Presented by the Adelaide Fire Brigade Employees in memory of Albert Francis Greenman, infant child of the late Fireman Greenman, killed at the steamer City of Singapore fire, April 26, 1924." In accepting the token of practical sympathy and assistance, Sister Smith (Deputy Superintendent of Nurses) heartily thanked the firemen for their gift. Miss Watson also expressed appreciation of the thoughtfulness and kindness of the firemen. The staff had thought a lot of Mrs. Greenman and little Albert, and the cot would be a permanent memorial to the Greenman family.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Friday 12 December 1924, page 2**

#### GREENMAN COT

##### Board Appreciates Gift

Mr. Frank K. Nieass (general secretary of the Government Workers' Association) has received the following letter from Mr. W. H. Sharland (secretary of the Children's Hospital):—"I very much regret that a previous engagement prevented me from being at the hospital when you and the firemen arrived yesterday afternoon to present the Greenman cot to the institution. I asked my senior clerk to explain the cause of my absence and tender an apology. "The board of management is always gratified to receive such tokens of good will to the hospital, and on behalf of the members, I desire to present sincere thanks for the gift, as well as the kind feelings which prompted it, especially as the little one for whom the cot was obtained, was an inmate of the hospital. "It is intended to place the cot in Colton ward, where the child was, as it is thought that would be the most appropriate place in the hospital, for it will be not only a reminder of the kindness of the donors, but also of the little patient for whom it was originally designed. "Will you kindly convey the thanks of the board of management to Mrs. Greenman, also to the employes of the Adelaide Fire Brigade, and all concerned in sending us this very useful gift."

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Saturday 13 December 1924, page 11**

#### FIRE AT RUBBISH DESTRUCTOR.

A sensation was caused in Halifax street about 8 o'clock on Friday night, when in response, to an alarm of fire at the rubbish destructor a fire engine dashed up, followed shortly afterwards by the rest of the headquarters brigade and appliances from all the out stations. Dense clouds of smoke were pouring from the destructor premises; but, notwithstanding the ominous signs, it was found that the outbreak was confined to the inside of the rubbish well. Headquarters received the call at 7.57 p.m., and by their fine work prevented serious consequences. The out stations were also called up, but their services were not required, and in about half an hour some of the engines had left the scene, The firemen, who were in charge of Chief Officer Dickie, paid a tribute to the efforts made by the Adelaide City Council employes at the destructor to extinguish the fire before the arrival of the brigade.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 16 December 1924, page 8**

SMALL ADELAIDE FIRES.

At 4.23 a.m., on Monday, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade received a summons to The Advertiser office, Waymouth street, where a power wire had fused, and caused a slight outbreak, which was quickly extinguished. At 9.56 a.m. the brigade attended a small fire at the Co-Operative Stores, Angas street, due to a line fault. At 4.57 a grass fire in a vacant allotment in Edward street, of Sturt street, brought another alarm signal, and the blaze was easily put out.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 17 December 1924, page 17**

FIRE ON THE BAY-ROAD.

The fire brigade received a call about 10.50 p.m. on Tuesday to the Bay-road, Keswick. Upon arrival they found about three acres of grass alight, but were able to prevent the fire reaching houses nearby, and after about an hour and a half's work, succeeded in extinguishing the flames.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 17 December 1924, page 10**

BIG GRASS FIRE.

At 10.51 on Tuesday night the head fire station, Wakefield street, received a call by telephone to the corner of Leader street and Bay road, Keswick. The men found a three-acre paddock of grass burning fiercely, endangering buildings in the vicinity. It was found impossible to use water to quell the outbreak, because of the distance of hydrants from the scene. The brigade returned to headquarters at midnight, after having requisitioned bags for the subduing of the flames, and after having traversed the whole paddock with buckets of water to extinguish smouldering remains.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Friday 19 December 1924, page 15**

FIRE AMONG POSTAL STORES.

At about 3 a.m. on Thursday a fire was discovered in the garage and fitting shop of the Post and Telegraph Stores depot West terrace, by the caretaker, Mr. Philip Barbuto. Mr. Barbuto obtained a fire extinguisher, but failed to work it. He then summoned the fire brigade, which was quickly in action. As a result of the blaze, a motor cycle was burnt beyond repair. During the fire Mr. Barbuto attempted to shift a tin of oil from the reach of the flames, but it ignited, causing burns on his hands. He was taken to the Adelaide Hospital by Constable Pomeroy. The flames were confined to the garage and fitting shop.

**News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Saturday 27 December 1924, page 1**

CITY SHOPS ON FIRE

Early Morning Blaze in Arcade

PREMISES BUILT AND INSURED BY COUNCIL

Through the prompt action of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade a fire which gave promise of becoming a conflagration was extinguished within half an hour at the City Arcade, off Grote street, early this morning. Two shops were gutted, and the contents of several others were damaged. The shops were constructed by the Adelaide City Council on the old site of Daw's fish market, about 12 months ago. Mr. H. P. Beaver (Town Clerk) stated that the whole of the shops in the arcade were insured by the Adelaide City Council. The policies were held by about a dozen different companies. but he could not give any particulars regarding the insurance in individual cases. Stocks contained in the shops were insured by the owners.

Volumes of black smoke issuing from the north-eastern corner of the City Arcade shortly after 5 o'clock attracted the attention of people who were early astir. Investigations showed that the boot shop of Mr. J. W. Marlin, situated at the corner of the recently constructed northern portion of the arcade was alight. Despite the fact that there was a westerly breeze blowing the flames quickly spread through the roof to the south. The roofs of several adjoining shops fell in, damaging stock. So great was the heat, that the plate-glass windows of two shops in the opposite side of the arcade were smashed and the window contents were partially destroyed. It is impossible definitely to ascertain how the fire started, but it is believed that the fusing of electric light wires near the northern entrance of the arcade was responsible for the outbreak. The fire spread rapidly to the shop of Mr. A. James, draper and clothier, which adjoins Mr. Marlin's premises on the eastern side. The contents were almost totally destroyed by fire and water. It is understood that the stock was not covered by insurance. The dividing walls between the shops reached to the ceiling, which was constructed of wunderlich stamped iron with joists of wood, and the flames thus had an uninterrupted sweep over the ceilings of the row of shops south to the main entrance. The woodwork in the ceiling burned fiercely, and had not the brigade been promptly on the scene the flames would have quickly enveloped the whole of the north-eastern wing.

#### Stranger Notifies Brigade

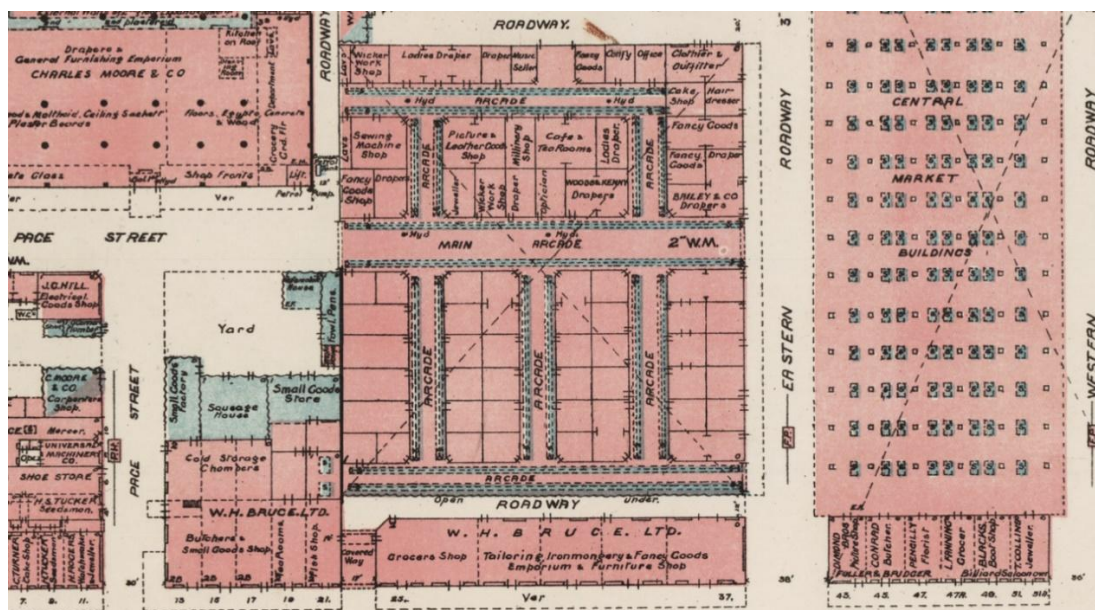
The first notification received by the Fire Brigade was from a passing stranger, who called at the Wakefield street station. A moment or two later, the police notified them by telephone. Five motor reels were promptly on the scene, and hoses were run in from Victoria square and Gouger street. The favorable breeze aided the firemen in getting the outbreak under control. It was a remarkably fine save in view of the nature of the building. Great praise is due to Chief Officer Dickie and his men. The arcade is intersected by a number of passageways, on either side of which are situated shops with large plateglass windows. The arched passageways are covered with Wunderlich iron, above which is a galvanised iron roof. Between the ceiling and the roof is a large space through which a natural draft has full play. Had the wind been a northerly one the whole arcade probably would have been demolished. The full extent of the damage could not be ascertained today. All the shops on the northern annexe suffered more or less severely.

The chief damage was done to the following:— No. 98. A. James, draper and clothier, stock almost totally destroyed, plate-glass window broken. No. 97 Mr. J. W. Marlin, boot shop, stock and fittings completely destroyed. No. 96. Mr. T. E. Conway, jeweller, stock damaged, ceiling fallen in. No. 95. Mr. W. G. Coombe, wickerworker, stock damaged by fire and water, roof fallen in. No. 94. "Dorothy Dodd" (Mr. D. E. Holmes), milliner, stock badly damaged by fire and water, roof fallen in. No. 93. A. W. Summerfield & Co., picture framers, stock damaged, roof partly fallen in. No. 15. "Vanity Fair" (Mrs. Wilkin-son), women's wear, damaged by water. No. 88. Central Tool Shop (E. C. Oggelsby), plateglass window smashed, window stock damaged by heat and water. No. 89. Madame Gardner, ladies' hair dressing salon, plateglass window cracked, wax models and other window contents damaged. The plateglass windows are insured by the City Council. It is at present impossible, owing to the premises being in the hands of the police and Insurance companies, to ascertain the full extent of the damage or insurance. The stock and fittings in the shop occupied by Mr. D. E. Holmes were insured for £500.

#### No Watchman

Constables Marsh and Allen reported to the City watchhouse that at 4.50 o'clock today they noticed a fire in Marlin's boot shop. Constable Allen immediately gave the alarm to the Fire Brigade. The brigade arrived and extinguished the fire, which extended to shops occupied by A. James (No. 98), draper and clothier, E. C. Oggelsby (88) Central Tool Shop, Madame Gardner (89), ladies' hairdresser's salon, T. E. Conway, (96), jeweller. W. G. Coombe (95), wickerworker, "Dorothy Dodd" (D. E. Holmes) (94), milliner. A. W. Summerfield & Co. (93), picture framer, Miss K. Wilton (15), ladies' wear, Adelaide Cake Company (16). Stock and

buildings were greatly damaged. They were unable to ascertain the origin of the fire or the amount of damage. There was no watchman on the premises. Both constables examined all the shops at 12.15 o'clock, and they appeared to be in order.



*City Arcade. Part of – State Library of South Australia - Adelaide plan. No.7 [cartographic material] / prepared for the Fire Underwriters' Association of South Australia by G. Garrett [C 109]*

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 27 December 1924, page 13**

#### FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS.

#### SPRINKLER ACTS UNNECESSARILY.

About five minutes past eight last night the fire brigade was summoned to the West-End brewery, Hindley-street, by the automatic alarm. It was found that the sprinklers were leaking, but there was no sign of any fire.

**Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 31 December 1924, page 9**

#### A MIDNIGHT BLAZE.

#### MOTOR HOUSE DAMAGED.

#### FINE WORK BY THE BRIGADE.

The vigilance of the police and the celerity with which the fire brigade turned out and got to work prevented an extensive fire in Pirie-street shortly before 12 o'clock last night. Standing at the corner of Pulteney and Pirie streets, Constable Riley noticed flames issuing from Steinke's Motor House, and informed Constable Moody, who was with Constable Hull on the other side of Pulteney-street. Constable Moody ran to the Flinders-street alarm and called the brigade, while his comrades went to ascertain the seat of the outbreak. Before Constable Moody had returned to Pirie-street the firemen were at work with their hoses, and quickly had the flames subdued. The premises, of wood and iron, are in the heart of a group of motor garages and workshops. The fire appears to have originated in the office on the ground floor, a wooden structure, and the flame's quickly spread to the front of the building. A motor car standing near the office had the hood burnt off and the upholstery considerably damaged, and a car in the window for show purposes suffered similar damage. A number of other cars in the building also suffered. The fact that the flames had a good hold and that the building

contained highly inflammable material shows how smartly and well the firemen performed their work. Within a few minutes of their arrival they had the flames under control.

**Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 31 December 1924, page 11**

FIREMEN'S BUSY YEAR.

Record Number of Calls.

First Death For Many Years.

At 12 o'clock to-night a memorable year for the South Australian Fire Brigades will have ended. In addition to the record number of 431 calls, involving a huge amount of damage, the year's fires have also taken a toll of firemen's lives.

Possibly, of all employes of public utilities, the fireman receives least real recognition. His task is regarded as light, and allowing for plenty of leisure, but his job is of anything but a "sweet" one. There is always something for him to do. Not only does he risk his life in combating the dread menace, but he is also a veritable jack of all trades. Such matters as keeping the station and equipment spotlessly clean, attending to all minor repairs on the motors, electric lighting installations and alarms, and rigorously examining and testing hoses and appliances day by day, are things which people do not see or know about. But the fact that they are done, and very efficiently too, is borne out by the effective manner in which the brigade works during the year, and at such small expense for general upkeep.

Several Big Fires.

Apart from the number of times the brigades have had to turn out, 1924 has been remarkable for such notable fires as those which consumed the premises of H. C. Richards, Limited, Currie street, the Port Adelaide flour mill, the S.A. Brush Company's factory, Flinders street, and, worst of all, the steamer City of Singapore, at Port Adelaide, where three gallant men lost their lives as a result of the terrible explosions which occurred on the petrol laden ship. These were the first deaths of local firemen in the discharge of their duty which have occurred for many years, and brings the total of such fatalities in South Australia up to six. The City of Singapore fire was also responsible for serious injuries to eight firemen, and slight injuries to four others. Of the body of one of the men killed, no trace has been found to this day.

A Record Fortnight

It is by no means an easy matter to get the Fire Chief (Mr. J. E. Dickie) to talk of the work of the brigade, and it was only because he believed that the work of the men should be recognised, that an outline of the brigade's activities for the year was given to The Register representative on Tuesday evening. The total number of calls since January 1, and up to Tuesday evening, explained Mr. Dickie, constituted a record, namely 431, as compared with 421 in 1923. Of course, there are 21 hours yet to go, he explained with a smile. Evidently he has had such an eventful year that he is prepared for anything to happen. During the fortnight, or rather, 13 days ended on December 18 last, the brigade attended 44 fires, which easily beats all previous records for a similar period.

Many Good Saves.

Although the total amount of insurance covering buildings attacked by fire has naturally been greater than in 1923 (£1,404,306), the actual damage will probably be found to be not proportionately great. This is owing to the fact that the brigade has this year been able to effect some remarkably fine saves. It is difficult to account for the increase in the number of fires, but the answer is probably to be found in the fact that the population is steadily growing. "It is not that the public are growing more careless," said Mr. Dickie, "as a matter of fact, I think they are much more careful than they used to be. Once upon a time we could always look forward to a few 'washhouse' fires every Monday morning—singed clothes, copper's burning, and so on, but those days are past. And I also think that the public are beginning to

realize the value to us of an early alarm—that our first minute is our best. We have no complaints to make in that direction at all. The intelligence of Adelaide people in this respect compares more than favourably with the other States." Mr. Dickie also attributes the more effective working of the brigade to the fact that the equipment has been increased at the head station during the year by the addition of two motor pump appliances and a fine big extension ladder; at Port Adelaide by a motor hose carriage, and motor pump appliance; and at Port Pirie the horse-drawn appliance was replaced by a motor. "We have no cause for complaint about our equipment, now," added Mr. Dickie.

#### Harassing the Fireman.

There has been no decrease in the usual number of alarms which have sent firemen tearing out to look for fires that did not exist. Indeed, of every three calls received during the year one has proved to be a malicious false alarm. It is a cowardly and indefensible trick on men who are prepared to risk their lives, not only for others, but for their property, at any minute of the day or night. "What do the men think about that sort of thing?" asked the interviewer. "Well, you should hear them for yourself after they have been dragged out of bed about 2 o'clock on a cold, rainy morning," replied the fire chief. One of the features of the year's, developments, so far as the men are concerned, has been their affiliation with the Australian Government Workers' Union, and their recognition in the Arbitration Court.

#### Effect of New Building Act

Mr. Dickie considers that the new Building Act, if properly carried into effect, should minimise the risk of fires in the future. He realizes, however, that there will be a tendency to construct higher buildings, and this will naturally present fresh difficulties to the firefighters. Such sources of danger as lift wells, stairways, and other floor openings, are provided for in the new regulations, however, and this should render the task of the brigade easier, notwithstanding the height of the buildings. Mr. Dickie's only complaint is that the provisions of the Act do not apply to buildings already in existence, and which are very much out of date. "It is noticeable, however," he said, "that more and more firms are equipping their premises with automatic sprinklers and alarms, which are periodically tested by the brigade.

#### Never Looks Back.

In closing his brief outline of the year's work of the brigade, Chief Dickie said:— "I never look back. When a fire is over and done with I forget all about it. And in this job you cannot plan ahead. The general of an army can map out his plan of campaign. We cannot. If one were to get a plan of the city, and lay out the dispositions for fighting every conceivable kind of fire, it would be no use. There are so many things which might alter the whole aspect of a fire. The only way to become thoroughly efficient in handling such cases is by relying on experience, and I am not efficient yet." Mr. Dickie, it may be explained, has been a fire fighter for more than 40 years.