

TERRIBLE BUSH FIRES.

THOUSANDS OF SQUARE MILES BURNED AND LAID WASTE.

DETROIT, Sept. 9.—The accounts which are hourly coming in as to the ravages of the forest fires show that there has been very little, if any exaggeration in the matter. The high winds that prevailed cut off nearly every means of escape. Large burning masses were lifted up and borne to great distances, starting fires in fresh places, and adding to the destruction. At Freecing the unfortunate people, most of whom are Poles, were caught in a fire-trap, and literally roasted alive, together with their cattle and horses. As a rule they were all now settlers. Numbers of them, blinded by the smoke and crazed by the fury of the flames and the agony of their sufferings, either died of their injuries or committed suicide. At least 300 are supposed to have perished.

The following villages have been completely burned down:—Bad Axe, Verne, Forest Bay, Richmondville, Charleston, Anderson, Decker-ville, Harrisville, and Sandusky. The following have been partly burned:—Port Hope, Mindon, and Ubbey. The loss in the villages is as nothing to that in the country, which is simply incalculable. The exact loss of life cannot yet be adequately ascertained, and the amount of damage done to property can only be roughly estimate.

At Paris, near Port Sanilac, up to last night, forty-five corpses, nearly all those of Poles, were found within a mile, many persons being still missing. In the whole settlement there is not one building left. Houses, crops, fences, all have disappeared.

South of Forestville from the lake back seven miles not one house is left to the square mile.

One man at Cato loses \$10,000 in grist mills, store and hotel. Here the settlers are nearly all Germans, and newcomers, and all have been burned out. The fire swept their property off like a hurricane, and drove many of them like sheep into the lake, where they perished miserably.

In Delaware township the people and cattle crowded to the lake shore. Men, women, and children have lost even the clothes they stood up in, and the unfortunate cattle have had their very hides burned through.

In Huron county the same has happened. One man driving through Huron county directly after the spread of the fire, reported that he had met five women entirely naked, each carrying a child. He gave them two flour bags to cover themselves with. A farmer saved his family, consisting of his wife and eight children by taking refuge in a field of buckwheat. A poor woman in his neighbourhood endeavoured to save herself and children by digging a hole and covering them as best she could with her hands. They were all subsequently found dead. The little ones had their heads burned off to the shoulders. The loss of cattle and animals is immense. Twenty head of cattle were found in a half-acre lot dead. Animals are strewed in all directions.

In addition to the dead, which are estimated at from 700 to 1,000, fully 5,000 persons have been rendered homeless, of whom many are absolutely without shelter.

Near Sanilac township, northwards, the people did not know any fire was near them until it was on them, and all had to run for the lake, and it being but a short distance all reached it in safety. John Kerr and family were asleep when their building caught, and a neighbour seeing it ran and woke them, and they succeeded in saving their house, but lost all else.

Mrs. W. Burgess got separated from her husband and lay all night in a ditch. Another person laid down in a mud-puddle and rowled over all night. Large parties of men have been detailed to bury the dead animals lest their corpses should breed a pestilence. The task of burying the human beings has in many cases been left to strangers, of whom one man reports that he saw 116 persons burned. In one place he saw four wagons bearing eight coffins, and one man walking behind alone. It was his entire family. Another man was following three coffins.

The whole of the Sanilac burnt region has been traversed by Rev. Z. Grenfell, Jr., pastor of the First Baptist Church here. He reports that the horrid of the approach of the fire was

darkness and a copper-coloured appearance of the sky. Later it changed to a deep red, and by two o'clock on the afternoon of Monday it became so dark that lanterns were a necessity in order that people might find their way out of doors. Mr. Grenfell relates the story of a Mr. J. Jenks, who said that the darkness was so intense that in passing his hand before his face it could not be seen. In the woods were many dead of every age, and presenting the revolting appearance of bodies which are scorched and charred by fire. The skill and courage of men seemed impotent to combat such flames, and the fleeing people were caught in fire traps and roasted as were their live stock. Mr. Grenfell tells of one farmer who was ploughing with his oxen a few miles from Sand Beach, who, perceiving the approaching darkness, started for his house. Reaching there he found that his wife had gone to a neighbour's. He took two children and gave three others in charge of his eldest daughter. Before travelling many rods they found themselves cut off by the flames. He turned in another direction and escaped with two children; the three children and the daughter were found the next day all of a heap and charred beyond recognition.

William Humphrey, a mail carrier between Argyle and Elmer, started on his route on Monday. Midway he was stopped by the flames, and unhitched his horse from the wagon. Mounting his horse with the mail bags he turned hastily back. The horse found its way back to Argyle without mail-bag or rider. A tag was tied to his main and he was urged back over his usual route. He reached Elmer, but Humphrey's body was found buried in the woods in one place and the half consumed mail-bag in another. The wagon was found reduced to cinders.

At Port Huron the following appeal has been published by the authorities:—

"Our country has been devastated by fire. The suffering is beyond description—people in a starving condition. Will the people of Canada lend aid? We need seed wheat, provisions and clothing. Orders have been received from the Secretary of the Treasurer that all goods for this purpose will pass free of duty."

THE PARRY SOUND FIRES.

The district of Parry Sound has passed through an experience during the past three weeks which will never be forgotten by the inhabitants, who have been kept in constant dread of the flames which day and night have covered the sky with volumes of smoke so dense that the sun has never appeared but as a great red ball, shorn of its brightness though not of its heat. No rain has fallen of any account since June, and under the intense heat even the streams of this well-watered district have failed. From Mr. J. C. Miller, M.P.P. for Muskoka, who is the head and chief proprietor of the Parry Sound Lumbering Company, a *Globe* reporter has obtained as reliable information as is at present available on the extent of the fires and the destruction caused by them.

What the destruction is, he says, will not be known until the smoke clears away, for the fires are still burning in every direction, and a strong wind, which may at any time spring up, may increase tenfold the devastation wrought thus far. The fires burn in every direction, and there is scarcely a square mile out of more than two thousand in this area but is sending up its contribution to the great pall of smoke which lays over the land. Beyond the multitude of minor fires which at any time may develop into great conflagrations, there have been five or six great fires which have come prominently under his notice. The first of these was started by a settler in the township of Fuller, in the month of June, on the north-western road, a few miles from Parry Sound. During the drought of July this fire burned in an easterly direction over a belt from half a mile to a mile in width across the northern part of the township of Macdougall, and after devastating the lands of the Parry Sound Lumbering Company, passed into the township of Ferguson, sweeping away a large area of forest in the limits of the Ontario Bank. An east wind then drove it back into the township of Cutting, where it is now raging. In all this fire has burned over 15,000 acres of very fine timber country.

Another fire on the Shawanaha River has

swept over the larger portion of the township of that name.

A fire broke out lately on the Nashoutcong River near Bying Inlet, and burning along both sides of the stream, ran south through the townships of Wallbridge and Harrison, enveloping both these townships in flames.

TWO HUNDRED MILES OF FIRE.

Along the Georgian Bay the Maganotawan Lumber Company have lost heavily by a fire which commenced three weeks ago and burned along a length of thirty miles of coast by a distant island not yet known but probably from six to ten miles, or over two hundred square miles of territory. It is still burning.

THE TOWNSHIP OF MILLS.

A very destructive fire originated apparently in a criminally careless manner has swept the township of Mills. It was started for the purpose of facilitating the repair of a Government colonization road. It is stated that Mr. Kelsey, who superintends the repairs on the north road, refused to start the fire, as he did not know, the weather being so dry, what destruction it might cause. Mr. D. M. Card, Road Inspector, it is reported came along and, notwithstanding Mr. Kelsey's remonstrances, gave preliminary orders that the fire should be started, saying that they "must build the road and let the fire take its chances." It took its chances, and besides burning out the crops and buildings of a Mr. McVitte destroyed twenty-five square miles of splendid timber yet unused by the Government. Mr. McVitte, it is said, has issued proceedings against the Provincial authorities for the destruction of his property.

In the vicinity of Parry Sound a fire was set on an island either by a camping party or by the Indians. The fire leaped across the islets to the mainland near the Boyne River, and worked its way up to within two hundred yards of the Ontario Bank Mills, which were saved with much difficulty on Monday; the wind carried it south east across the Parry Sound Road in an old barn. The east wind on Wednesday and Thursday drove it back towards the Village of Parry Sound endangering the village, and the large establishment of Wm. Beathly and the Parry Sound Lumbering Company. A telegram yesterday morning said the danger was over. The loss by these fires is already about \$20,000, and the Ontario Bank Mill loss nearly as much.

It is reported that over 3,000,000 feet of saw logs owned by Cook Bros., and others have been burned in the dried up bed of East River, in the township of Chaffey, but the exact truth regarding this is not yet known.

By these great fires between three and four hundred square miles have certainly been burned, but there are fires yet unreported which may add greatly to the area. They still burn and at any hour may sweep much of the territory that remains. The gum forests on good land are rarely destroyed, the fires confining themselves mainly to rocky districts, green timber, and old areas burned in previous years. The loss of life thus far has been nothing so far as learned, and while elsewhere hundreds of farmers are burned out, the writer has heard of only one, McVeth, in the township of Mills, who has lost everything, including a saw mill. Fences have everywhere suffered on the farms, and it has been only by long continued fighting night and day with all the available forces that could be gathered together that the flames have been prevented from sweeping the country. In timber the loss has been enormous, and thus far can scarcely fall short of one million dollars.

The pine which is burned over, unless stripped of its bark before spring, will be attacked by the pine borer—*Pissodes Strobi*—a grub about two inches long and a quarter of an inch thick. This borer is furnished with a nuger-like proboscis, with which it bores right through a tree. The noise of the boring is quite audible. The borer only attacks burned, fallen, or decaying trees, the beetle never depositing its eggs under the bark of a dry tree. Scarcely one out of all the trees now damaged by fire will escape destruction or serious injury from this borer.

In regard to fires Mr. Miller thinks that legislative action is necessary. The present law is a failure, and steps should be taken to secure a better one compelling any farmer who wishes to clear a fallow to obtain first the permission of

the stipendiary Magistrate of the district, who would if he considered it safe to grant the settler's request notify by letter all the timber limit holders of the neighbourhood of the fact. A precaution could likewise be taken by notification in some way of neighbouring settlers. If nothing is done, the loss from fires in future will be enormous.

Mr. Miller could give no information of a definite character regarding the great fires in Muskoka, not being at all familiar with them.

THE MUSKOKA FIRES.

Mr. C. Duke, of Yorkville, has within the last few days received two letters from his son Charles, who is farming in the Muskoka district, in which are given accounts of the ravages committed out there by the bush fires. The young man writes from Utterson. In his first letter dated September 1st, he informs his father that their experiences of the previous day were "awful." The had at last to fly for their lives. The writer proceeds:—"The two houses are saved and all the live stock, but the barns and fences are all completely gone. We came to Titterton last night, and I am just going up to the farm. I dread to go. I know it will look awful. West's buildings are all gone; Turner's buildings, excepting the house, are all down; Fearon is completely cleared out—not an article left; Captain Openshaw is similarly visited; also Thours. The English minister's house at Port Sidon, and W. Clark's houses are gone, but Mr. Crown's is saved. I don't know how it will end. Poor old Turner died on the roadside after he was carried out. We have saved the fanning-mill, plough and cultivator."

The next letter is dated Tuesday night (last), Young Duke says:—"I cannot give you very good news yet. Rain threatened, but did not come; and yesterday and to-day the flames have been finishing Turner's fences, and the sawlogs are all blazing as I write. The wind is blowing hard. I saw Fearson yesterday; he looks bad; all his sheep were burned to death; everything was swept in the clearance that he lived in, but he saved his other barn and a haystack. Harvey had no fire near him." In a P. S. the writer adds by way of a crumb of comfort, "You need not be anxious, as I think we are all right now."

CANADIAN SEPPING.

OTTAWA, Sept. 10.—The Department of Marine and Fisheries has just issued a list of vessels on the registry books of the Dominion of Canada on December 31st, 1881. From it it appears that the number of vessels remaining on the registry books of the Dominion on that date including old and new vessels, sailing vessels, steamers and barges, was 7,377, measuring 1,311,218 tons register, as compared with 1870. The number of steamers on the registry book on the same date was 918, with a gross tonnage of 190,159 tons, and a net tonnage of 120,141 tons. Assuming the average value to be \$30 a ton, the value of the registered tonnage of Canada on the 31st December last would be \$39,336,540, or £7,867,308.

The Sorrows of Genius.

Homer was a beggar.
Cervantes died in hunger.
Terrence, the dramatist, was a slave.
Dryden lived in poverty and distress.
Sir Walter Raleigh died on the scaffold.
Butler lived a life of penury and died poor.
Bacon lived a life of meanness and distress.
Plutus, the Roman comic poet, turned a mill.
Paul Borghese had fourteen trades and yet starved with all.
Tasso, the Italian poet, was often distressed for five shillings.
Steele, the humorist, lived a life of perfect warfare with bailiffs.
Otway, the English dramatist, died prematurely and through hunger.
Bentivoglio was refused admittance into a hospital he had himself erected.
The death of Collins was through neglect, first causing mental derangement.
Savage died in prison at Bristol, where he was confined for a debt of forty dollars.
Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield was sold for a trifle to save him from the grip of the law.
Chatterton, the child of genius and misfortune, destroyed himself at eighteen.