

DESOLATION IN MINNESOTA.

A TERRITORY THIRTY MILES SQUARE SWEEPED BY A PRAIRIE FIRE—MANY FARMS DEVASTATED—GREAT SUFFERING AND AN ENORMOUS LOSS OF PROPERTY.

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times.

ST. PAUL, Oct. 10.—Dispatches and letters from several places on the western border of the State report prairie fires of considerable extent. The most serious one is on the Pomme De Ferre River, 30 miles from Benson, Swift County, where the fire started on Sunday in an unexplained manner, but probably from the carelessness of some hunter who had been out shooting along the river. The fire spread with great rapidity and swept down toward Benson at a frightful rate, clearing everything in its track, and giving the residents of that town serious alarm. Many prosperous farms lay in the track of the flames, and they were swept of all combustible material, many owners narrowly escaping death in their efforts to save property. The ground over which the fire spread is 30 miles square, and scarcely anything remains to show where the farms stood. All is a black, desolate area. Hundreds of farmers who a few days ago were well to do are now destitute. On all that territory scarcely a dollar's worth of property now remains. The farmers lost their horses, oxen, sheep, hay, wheat, wagons, farm machinery, barns, houses, granaries, and, in fact, everything but their lives. On Tuesday the fire swept to the east and south of Benson, taking everything in its way, and repeated the devastation wrought in the West. Details of the losses are wanting, news facilities being rare in the thinly-settled country, but the aggregate must be enormous. The cause of the unusual destructiveness of the prairie fire is the rank growth of the prairie grass.

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