

# The Dalles Chronicle.

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## APPALLING DISASTER

Hundreds of Lives Lost by Forest Fires.

ENTIRE COUNTRY DEVASTATED

Awful Scenes of Horror and Desolation in the Burned District—Impossible to Identify the Victims.

CHICAGO, Sept. 3.—Reports to the Tribune from portions of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin, in which forest fires are raging, show that the loss of property at a low estimate has already reached \$12,000,000, not including standing timber destroyed, but even worse is the loss of life, which it is feared, will reach as high as 1,000. About 20 towns have been destroyed, driving thousands of families from homes.

The Herald Summary is as follows: "Six towns wiped out and more than 500 dead is the record made by forest fires in Minnesota in the last 24 hours. In Hinckley, Sandstone, Pokegama, Sandstone Junction, Skunk Lake and Mission Creek there are 355 known dead. In addition, several hundred are missing, while from 150 to 200 people are scattered on farms throughout the district burned over."

The Times estimates at least 500 persons dead as follows: Hinckley, 250; Sandstone, 40; Sandstone Junction, 25; Pokegama, 25; Skunk Lake, 29; Pine-town, 12; Mission Creek 9; Partridge, 8; Kettle River Junction, 6; Carlton 3; Rutledge, 2; miscellaneous, 80.

Reports from the forest fires received at the Northwestern and Wisconsin Central railway headquarters today, showed a fearful loss of life and destruction of property. The Northwestern received word at 10 o'clock that a heavily-loaded freight train had been abandoned on a burning bridge. An official said the reports indicated that unless the fire-swept region received rain the havoc would be worse today than yesterday. The Wisconsin Central service was badly demoralized.

Professor Moore, of the weather bureau here, predicts hard rain for the burnt region today, and a light rainfall began here during the forenoon.

A. J. Farling, local manager of the Milwaukee & St. Paul railway, says: "Forest fires are still raging between Sidway and Ontagon, in the Northern Peninsula of Minnesota. The wires have been down north of Iron Mountain since Sunday evening, and we are unable to get any information today. Forest fires are also raging along the line of our Wisconsin Valley division at Needah and Rudolph, about seven miles north of Grand Rapids. Considerable damage has been done to the cranberry marshes."

### AT HINCKLEY.

Graphic Story of the Fight for Life by Settlers.

HINCKLEY, Minn., Sept. 3.—Gentle rains are falling today and quenching the burning embers of the immense forest fires that did so much damage to this city. The blackened ruins of two or three buildings are all that remains standing of the once prosperous town of Hinckley, with 1700 people, and its busy railroad and lumbering interests. The town is the junction point of the St. Paul and Duluth & Eastern railways of Minnesota, and both of these roads have suffered losses that cannot now be estimated, while the loss to the timber interest is something beyond computation. This is today a place of mourning, and the burial of the charred and unrecognizable bodies of the hundreds of victims has saddened the survivors even more than the disaster itself. The fire was so overwhelming in immensity that none, in the first terror of the moment, could realize how great was the loss. Each was so intent in saving his own life that little thought was given to the disaster in general by most, although many cases of unselfish heroism have been reported. The bodies thus far recovered have been placed in rough pine boxes for burial, and the majority buried without a knowledge of their identity. The wires that were down this side of

Pine City have been so far put in shape, and the Associated Press operator is able to send his report as he sits on an empty keg in the open air, there being no shelter of any kind in town. Most of the survivors went to Pine City yesterday for food and shelter, and the women and children are still there, but many men have returned to their ruined homes to see if by any possibility anything remains.

The limited train that left Duluth at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon had an experience north of this place that will place the entire crew on the roll as heroes. They came to within a mile and a half of this place through the smoke, although Engineer Root could not see 100 feet away. Fires were bearing down on them from every side, and there seemed no chance for their lives but to go ahead. The number of fleeing homesteaders and residents of this place was so great that finally the engine was stopped, and as many as could get aboard the train were taken on. Meantime the engineer's clothes caught fire as did also those of the fireman, and both men seemed overcome with the fury of the flames, which had seized on the engine. Fireman McGowan put out the fire on his own clothes by jumping into the water tank and threw water on engineer Root, who staid at his post holding the throttle and nerving himself to stand to his duty, though he perished. There seemed to be no chance ahead. The train was backed at full speed as soon as the refugees were aboard until the swamp near Skunk lake, six miles north, was reached, where the passengers and over 250 residents of Hinckley, who had boarded the train, buried themselves in mud. They remained there through the night, and early in the morning were brought down the road. Many cars were badly burned and much shattered by the experience. The windows on the coaches were burst by the heat, and a number of men became crazed by excitement and terror, and threw themselves out of the windows to their deaths. The cars were all on fire before the swamp was reached, and the entire train was soon in ashes, the tender being also burned.

Engineer Root was taken to his home at White Bear. His physicians hope he may recover, although inhaling the hot fumes, smoke and air may be too much for him. The glass in the cab windows broke and he was badly cut about the head, while his clothes were nearly burned from his body. One piece of glass laid bare his jugular and it seems miraculous he escaped alive. His only thought was for the safety of his passengers. He said in reply to the remark that he had become the hero of the country: "I only did my duty."

A train on the Eastern Minnesota was ditched near Pokegama, a short distance west of Hinckley, but the passengers all escaped. The train was probably burned after the passengers and crew escaped, although no definite news was received. A remarkable thing connected with this accident is the fact that only a few feet in front of where the train was ditched a bridge had been burned, which would have caused a very serious accident, with a certain loss of life. It is not thought any other trains have been caught in the fires. None are running today. All the bridges have burned and in some places the track is useless, rails being twisted out of shape and the ties burned. Only one dead body has been found at this place this morning, and is likely the dead here will not exceed 200, the figure given last night. All the bodies will be buried today, as it will be impossible to keep them any longer. A call has been sent to the Twin Cities for more shovels and men to bury the dead, and they will get here on a relief train during the afternoon.

### Destruction of Barronette.

SPOOS, Wis., Sept. 3.—The destruction of Barronette was complete. One lone building is left of a city of 700 inhabitants. One man was burned. The total loss is \$250,000. Shell lake has 52 dwellings burned, with a loss of \$75,000. Three hundred and sixty people are homeless, and many without a dollar of insurance. Deeds of heroism are plentiful. One widow dragged a sick son from the house into a potato patch, and there protected him from the flames, while the rest of the inhabitants fled in terror. The fires are now under control in this vicinity.

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### Northwestern Wisconsin Ablaze.

CHIPPEWA FALLS, Wis., Sept. 3.—Northwestern Wisconsin is one sea of flames, and reports are coming to this city constantly of fatalities caused by the conflagration. Rib Lake, Marengo and Bradshaw have been completely wiped out, and at Bradshaw three persons lost their lives. Yesterday a message was received from Caddot, asking for assistance. A force from Chippewa was sent up, and until 10 p.m. last night 100 inhabitants of the village struggled to preserve their homes. At 10 o'clock the fire had abated in the immediate vicinity of Caddot. Two miles away, in a dense forest, which terminates at the limits of the town, the woods are in a blaze, and the wind is carrying the flames with great rapidity toward the town. If no rains fall before evening the town will be wiped out. The inhabitants are prepared for fight on a moment's warning. No news has been received from the party sent to rescue the village.

### The Pokegama Survivors.

MORA, Minn., Sept. 3.—The surviving families from Pokegama have been brought in by hand-cars. Several dead bodies were found by a rescuing party. Twenty-two more are missing, with little chance of being found alive. The dead are: Fred Molander, wife and two children; Charles Olsen, Miss Nora Olsen, Thomas Raymond, wife and three children; Oscar Larsen and sister, David Goodsell, Charles Whitney, Mr. Barnes, J. Brannon. A number of families escaped by lowering themselves into wells and seeking refuge in the river. A relief party has started out today. The loss will foot up about \$50,000, on which there was not a cent of insurance.

### Breckenridge's Campaign.

LEXINGTON, Ky., Sept. 3.—The primaries, which will decide the result in the Ashland district, will be held Saturday, September 15. For the closing two weeks, Colonel Breckenridge will rally his supporters, and his campaign committee announces meetings day and night for every remaining day, all over the district. Breckenridge is speaking night and day. He will speak here for the third time in this contest Wednesday night. The Owens and Settle campaign committees also announce lists of speakers, among them being many prominent citizens.

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### TREE MINES.

A Curious Industry of Southern Asia—Logs Excellent for Coffins. One of the most curious industries in the world is the business of mining for coffin planks which is carried on in Upper Tonquin, a portion of the French possessions, in southeastern Asia. In a certain district in this province there exists a great underground deposit of logs, which were probably the trunks of trees engulfed by an earthquake or some other convulsion of nature at a comparatively recent period. The trees, says the Youth's Companion, are a species of pine known to the natives, and also to some extent to European commerce, as nam-hou. The wood is almost imperishable, and has the quality, either through its nature or as the result of its sojourn underground, of resisting decay from dampness. This quality makes it particularly valuable for the manufacture of coffins, and for this purpose it is largely exported to Europe. The trees are often a yard in diameter. They are buried in sandy earth at a depth of from two to eight yards, and are dug up by native labor as demand is made for them. In many other places in the world trees are found underground in a very fair state of preservation. In Vermont certain meadows, which now are cultivated every year, are known to be underlaid with great masses of logs which were brought down and deposited in great jams in floods within the recollection of living men, and left where they were. In the course of time the interstices between the logs filled up with earth and all were covered over evenly with more earth and vegetable growth. Whenever any of those buried logs are dug up they are found to be in a surprisingly good state of preservation; but the business of "mining" them has not yet become an industry.

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