

Disastrous Bush Fire at Condah.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

CONDAB, February 7.

A bush fire, the first of the season so far as this locality is concerned, started to-day about a mile and a half north of the township in one of Mr. McDonald's paddocks. The fire seemed, at the time of writing, to be spreading rapidly and travelling in the direction of the township. Assistance is being got from all directions, and it is hoped the progress of the fire will be stayed before much damage is done.

February 9.

The fire mentioned previously proves to be very extensive. It started about three miles north of Condah, and made a clean sweep of the country between, destroying about 2,000 acres of grass and £200 worth of wattle belonging to Mr. A. McDonald; also a woolshed and other buildings. It crossed the road at Charcoal Arms into Condah Hill estate and travelled down towards Lake Condah, being now burning at Spring Creek, the whole of the country between Whittlebury Road and Condah Swamp being burnt. The Condah Hill homestead was with difficulty saved, but a quantity of hay and two waggons were destroyed; also about 5,000 acres of grass and a lot of fencing. A tree was burnt down near Condah and in falling broke the telegraph wire and blocked the railway line, which was cleared in time for the morning train. About 60 men have been working constantly since Saturday evening and the only accident so far reported, occurred to Master P. Clarke, who had his knee cap split through falling. Yesterday was intensely hot, the register being 102 in the shade, with a strong north wind. To-day is cloudy with a strong north-westerly wind, and unless a change takes place the fire will prove even more destructive than the big fire of four years ago. This is the third year in succession that Condah Hills has been burned out.