

BEN LOMOND BURNED OVER.

The San Vicente Grant and Adjoining Farms Devastated by Fire.

TEN THOUSAND ACRES UNDER FIRE.

Great Destruction of Timber, Wood, Lumber and Fencing—J. W. Dennison a Heavy Loser.

All last week, at an early hour each afternoon, the sun was shrouded in smoke over the Ben Lomond mountain and sank into the western horizon like a ball of fire. Rumors reached town of forest fires on the mountain, but the National Guard was absorbing the undivided attention of our people and the matter attracted but little notice. But while we were watching the mimic battle of the guardsmen, on Ben Lomond there was a warfare of the elements in progress of vital interest to the residents in that region. No blank cartridges would repel the enemy that was upon them, but only the most constant watchfulness and determined energy were able to stay the progress of the flames that swept over the entire San Vicente grant of about 8,000 acres and extended for six miles along the Ben Lomond mountain, burning off the pasture of nearly every ranch in that district. The flames, which are now practically subdued, have left a scene of appalling desolation to the eye of the spectator. Thousands of acres of magnificent timber stands blackened and leafless and ever and anon the echoes are awakened by the falling of some huge giant of oak or redwood which has been burned out at the stump. The "fall feed" of nearly every farmer on the mountain has been burned off and the loss of fencing will be very great.

On Wednesday, Mr. J. W. Dennison barely saved his house from destruction, his barn burning and the house several times caught fire and was only saved by the incessant efforts of himself and family and the fact of an abundant water supply. Mr. Dennison's damage is the greatest of any settler on the mountain, as he lost about 10,000 shakes and between 300 and 400 cords of wood, besides his barn, all uninsured.

The residence of J. McCulloch, further up the ridge, and which is surrounded by timber, was at one time enclosed by fire and he had a narrow escape.

On Thursday, Mr. H. Cowell sent up a four horse wagon load of men to assist the Ben Lomond settlers in the protection of their homes and property.

The fire originated on the Reese tract or San Vicente grant, and was started accidentally or otherwise by a party of campers. At first it burned slowly and at that time could have been subdued.

Surf
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