

Loss of Life Feared in B.C. Forest Fires

Blaze Sweeps Through Area
Where Prospectors at
Work

BUILDINGS ON MANY RANCHES DESTROYED

Farmers Report Loss of
Sheep and Cattle in
Flames

(Special Dispatch to the Herald)

OLIVER, B.C., Aug. 7.

—With possible loss of life to prospectors, the forest fire that has been raging on Anarchist mountain near here for some days past has swept on, destroying homes, barns, and farms lying in its raging pathway.

Several prospectors were known to have been working near Camp McKinney, once a flourishing "gold town," and now deserted. Forestry officials are searching the hills in the wake of the flames for traces of them. Two men, who are working in a mine near the Rock Creek end of the fire, are now known to have escaped; these are "Jimmy" Copeland, who was found safe in his shack, the fire having burned all around it, and his partner, A. R. Primmell, who arrived in the town carrying a sack of ore samples.

In the canyon where fighters were battling, a whirlwind rushed the flames to the top of the canyon in a solid sheet of fire, where it started in the direction of Cecil Clark's ranch. Circling the farm, the flames devoured it. The owner lost a prized gold watch when the house went up in flames a few minutes after he had left it, and his barn and hay shed with 40 tons of hay were destroyed. The Hatton ranch was the next to go, Mrs. Hatton and her two nieces escaped in an auto sent for them from Kettle river.

Many Ranches Razed

A change of wind brought the fire to the Shaver ranch, where it burned the hay and a barn. The next was the Samuel Cross property, better known as the historic McLean homestead, settled in the early days. Nothing could stop the blaze and stables, barns and sheds were consumed, and the house and furniture soon were a heap of smoking debris. The McLennan ranch was saved, although it had a close call.

Kerby's ranch, which is also near Camp McKinney, is said to have lost everything, including the house, barns, sheep and cattle. A Mr. Brown also is a property loser, the total extent of the damage here being uncertain.

Grand Forks Gazette
August 7, 1931

Fires Cause Great Damage In Rock Creek Vicinity

Rock Creek—A fire seven miles long and one half miles in width laid bare in its path of destruction houses, cattle and crops here by Wednesday night. The ranches burned are Clark, Shaver's and that of Samuel Cross who moved from this district a year ago. Also several residences of prospectors were burned including that of James Copeland whose life was feared for some time. But the aged miner had managed to escape the fire and was found at Bridesville.

Fighters Flee For Lives

Fighters combating with the flames had to flee for their lives on Monday when the flames swept down on their camp that was situated between the two creeks. The smoke pall being so dense that they could barely see their way out. As they were making their escape a high wind sprang up that scattered sparks and ashes for miles in every direction making escape hazardous.

On the approach of the fire to the Clark ranch Mr. Clark loosed his stock and had no time to gather any valuables from his ranch home. Besides losing his home and valuables the fire destroyed his barn and hay shed which housed 40 tons of hay. When the flames reached the Hatton ranch a bucket brigade managed to save the house but the hay stack and crops were wiped out. The wind then changed, carrying the flames to the Shaver and Samuel Cross homesteads, and the buildings and crops were quickly destroyed.

PROSPECTORS IN FIRE

Six Ranches Destroyed in Oliver District When Flames Sweep Mountain

Special to The Vancouver Sun

OLIVER, B. C., Aug. 7.—A number of prospectors are believed to have lost their lives; at least six ranch homes have been wiped out and heavy loss, both in buildings and timber, has been sustained in a forest fire near here which leaped beyond control last night.

The fire, which had been under control for several days, suddenly swept over Anarchist Mountain and fanned by a freak whirlwind, rapidly tore through the surrounding ranches.

Engaged



LADY MARY CAMBRIDGE

LONDON, Aug. 7.—The London Daily Mail says the engagement of Lady Mary Cambridge, daughter of the Earl of Athlone and niece of Queen Mary, to Capt. Abel Smith of the Royal Horse Guards, is about to be announced.

Capt. Smith was aide to the Earl of Athlone during the latter's recent tenure of the governor-generalship of South Africa.

Lady Mary is 25. She is a great favorite of Queen Mary and is fond of outdoor sports. Capt. Smith is 30.

Several prospectors were known to have been working near Camp McKinney, once a flourishing gold town. Forestry officials are searching the hills in the wake of flames for traces of them.

Two men, who were working in a mine near the Rock Creek end of the fire, are now known to have escaped. They are "Jimmy" Copeland, who was found safe in his shack, the fire having burned all around it, and his partner, T. Primmell, who arrived in the town carrying a sack of ore.

In the canyon where fighters were battling a whirlwind rushed the flames to the top of the canyon in a solid sheet of fire, where it started in the direction of Cecil Clark's ranch. Circling the farm, the flames devoured it.

LOSES PRIZED WATCH

The owner lost a prized gold watch when the house went up in flames a few minutes after he had left it.

His barn and hay shed with 40 tons of hay were also destroyed.

The Hatton ranch was the next to go, Mrs. Hatton and her two nieces fled in an auto sent for them from Kettle River.

HISTORIC HOMESTEAD

A change of wind brought the fire to the Shaver ranch, where it burned the hay and a barn.

The next was the Samuel Cross property, better known as the historic McLean homestead, settled in the early days.

Nothing could stop the blaze.

Stables, barns and sheds were consumed, and the house and furniture were soon a heap of smoking debris.

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Kerby's ranch, which is also near

Continued on Page Two

BRIDESVILLE ITEMS

R. L. Burguiest of Oroville was a guest at the hotel during the week-end.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Schofield of Midway were the guests of A. R. Barwick on Monday.

Mrs. Wm. Klette and children of Oliver are spending a few days visiting with Mrs. L. P. Billups.

A. B. Winter of Grand Forks made his usual trip through here last week distributing Rawleigh products.

Joe Pringle had a close shave during the fire on Monday. His shirt was scorched before he succeeded in getting to safety in his prospect tunnel.

Dr. Kingston, M. L. A., of Grand Forks, motored here on Wednesday and advised L. F. Billups, road foreman, to repair the highway through the Rock Creek canyon as soon as possible.

Bob Grey of Seattle, formerly of San Jose, California, featherweight champion of the west was a guest at the hotel during the week-end. He was accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Patchin, the former being Mr. Grey's manager. Grey's last bout was about three weeks ago with Allan Foster in Seattle.

Mrs. Anna Lombard and son Frank of Wardner, Idaho, returned to their home after spending a few days visiting with Mr. and Mrs. Charley Primalle. Luckily they had departed before the conflagration which left the aged couple homeless. They were made comfortable at the home of Mrs. Harry Edmunds.

Much sympathy is felt throughout this district for the residents who lost their homes and property during the disastrous fire last week which swept rapidly through the timber in the vicinity of Camp McKinney and Bridesville owing to the strong wind that prevailed. Luckily J. K. Kirby and son Dave had a car and rushed to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Primalle and took them to Bridesville. The flames almost overcame them at the Rock Creek bridge while making the grade. Much credit is due Mr. Kirby for saving the aged couple who are over 70 years old. Mr. Kirby lost his home and several sheep and cattle but fortunately his horses were saved and were found in a field of grain after the fire was over. Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Primalle lost their home but their chickens escaped; somehow their coop was not burned. James Copeland lost his home but despite being nearly 100 years old walked from the fire and arrived at the hotel here that evening. Jack Connors, who resides in the late Jack Walters' cabin, lost his bachelor outfit but escaped with his life. The cabin belonging to the late Archie Aberdeen was burned, and the buildings belonging to Cecil Clarke and several cattle and chickens and pigs, etc., all were swept out. He suffers a heavy loss. The buildings belonging to Samuel Cross and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Donald Alden and family were burnt down also. The fire fighters rushed Mrs. Alden and her four children to Rock Creek where they found shelter at the home of Mrs. L. Davis for a few days. Wm. Hatton's hay shed filled with hay was burned but luckily his house and other buildings were saved. Wm. Munich and Joe Frank are still fighting the fire from their homes which are safe as yet. The highway through the canyon was closed for a few days on account of the bridges being burnt. The fire fighters had a narrow escape when the blaze swept their cook camp and demolished everything. The fighters were then assisted at the home of Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Billups until other cook camps were established on Baker creek. Mr. Billups lost four of his best horses and several of his beef cattle by the fire. A. F. Eddy lost some beef cattle also. The fire is still burning in the camp McKinney region and back of Bridesville and Sidley.