

Australian Forest Fire.

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But Nature is hardly less terrifying when she fans with gleeful breath the leaping flames of a forest-fire. Driven before a 50 mile and hour gale, fire recently swept huge tracts of the State of Victoria, in Australia, leaving death and havoc in its wake.

Australian armed forces were called in to assist in the emergency. Aircraft were used for spotting purposes. Army portable radio transmitters kept fire-fighting sections in constant touch, and made it possible to move reserves rapidly to newly threatened points. It was organisation which finally brought the fire under control and enabled the firefighters to triumph in their battle against this destructive force of Nature.

Damage is estimated at no less than 2 million pounds sterling. A quarter of a million sheep and many thousands of cattle were burned to death.

Apart from human life, bush fires have cost Australia many millions of pounds in the past. This was the second fire in a month, and it left a trail of devastation and ruin. Four townships were completely burnt out. Thousands of people lost everything they possessed.

Hundreds of houses were reduced to cinders. 20 people died and more than 70 were seriously injured, in what proved to be the most damaging fire in Victoria's history.