

prevailing has rendered the prairie grass highly inflammable. Great damage has been done to farms and farm improvements.

A few days ago a prairie fire approached the town of Mt. Vernon, at about three o'clock in the afternoon. The inhabitants turned out en masse to fight the fire, but in vain. Though aided by people from the neighboring town of Mitchell, they could not stop the fire, and it consumed the entire town, leaving all the families in it homeless. The loss amounted to about \$130,000.

Several other villages have been destroyed in a similar manner, one of them, Leola, containing 300 inhabitants. A furious wind drove the sweeping flames from farm to farm and from village to village. The total damage will amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Alderman Smith returned to Minneapolis April 10, from Sully County, Dakota, where he went to investigate the extent of the damage by the recent prairie fires. "It was a terrible sight," he said. "I did not suppose that the fires were so bad. There are at least 100 families in Sully County who lost most of the wheat they had. Some of them saved a few things, but in most cases nothing was saved. Those who witnessed the fire told me that the flames jumped four and five rods, so that ordinary fire protection was of no avail. One man was sick, and his daughter in bed, when he saw the fire coming, and his wife rushed into the barn to untie the horses, while he ran to save the girl, and he had just carried her out on a plowed field when the fire sprang upon his house. His wife barely escaped. The horses were burned. I saw where 400 sheep were burned in a heap. The people of Blunt have done a good deal for the sufferers, but they are unable to do half enough, and I hope the good people of Minneapolis will put their shoulders to the wheel at once. Seed wheat is what they want particularly, now that the spring season is at hand. Everything that can be given in the shape of relief ought to be turned in at once."

A Sudden Stop.

In Castle Garden, New York, on April 10 six English boys being passengers on the steamer *Wyoming*, were detained on the charge that they had been hired in England by a man named Rew, to work on his brother's ranch in Iowa. The boys will probably be sent back to England.

Samoa Affairs.

A Washington despatch says: It is authoritatively stated at the Department of State that the three treaty powers concerned in Samoan affairs—England, Germany, and the United States, have reached an understanding, by the terms of which they will each keep but one war vessel at Samoa, pending the termination of the Berlin conference. The vessel to be sent there by the United States will be the *Alert*, 1000 tons, now at Honolulu. The German corvette *Sophie*, now on her way out from Zanzibar, will repre-

sent the German interests; while England will doubtless order the *Calliope*'s return to Samoa from Sydney or replace her if she is materially damaged by the hurricane.

The London *News*, referring to the coming Samoan conference, says: "Germany must abandon her ideas of reducing the preponderating influence. The appointment of Bates as one of the American commission shows that any claim in that direction will render the conference entirely nugatory."

A Scoundrelly Cashier.

The following account of a crime that is becoming far too common, is given in a late dispatch from Anoka, Minn.:

The doors of the First National Bank were closed last evening. The cashier is in Canada. There is a woman in the case. P. F. Pratt, the cashier, went to Minneapolis a week ago last Thursday, and on Friday the bank officials were startled by a note from the Merchants Bank of St. Paul that the account of the First National was overdrawn \$20,000. A messenger was at once dispatched to St. Paul and discovered Pratt had drawn out about \$3,000 due the bank and about twice as much more on his check. A bank examiner was notified and gave the books a hasty overhauling. Enough was learned to show that matters were in a bad way, and that Pratt is short nearly \$100,000. Not knowing where the end might be, the directors concluded to place the bank in the hands of the examiner and he will appoint a receiver. It is impossible at the present to tell the amount of Pratt's villany. Correspondents of the bank both in Chicago and New York allowed Pratt to overdraw to the amount of \$15,000. In addition to this he raised \$30,000 on the personal vote of Mrs. Noland, an aged widow residing at Dayton, who trusted Pratt to manage her business matters to a large extent. It also appears that Pratt, in company with H. S. Sparks, has been speculating in wheat, and Sparks is overdrawn \$10,000.

Last summer the good people of Anoka were horrified to learn that Pratt was on intimate terms with a handsome young woman of doubtful reputation. The scandal soon became public property and his wife took her two children and went to Boston where they have since resided. Soon after this the grass widow also disappeared, but it is alleged she has since lived in Minneapolis where Pratt supported her and her illegitimate child.

There was quite a contest in the bank directory at the meeting in January over his position on account of the scandal, but it was finally decided that he close up certain business matters with which he was familiar before closing up his affairs with the institution. It is believed his stealings began at that time.

The president of the bank is L. H. Pincknor, a well known business man of this city, and pioneer of the

northwest. The capital stock was \$150,000. Unless matters prove worse than expected depositors will probably be paid in full. As yet no steps have been taken to hunt down the absconding cashier, but a reward for his capture will probably be offered at once. As he has had a week's start he is undoubtedly on the safe side of the Canada line. It is learned he disposed of all his property in this vicinity some time ago.

Desperadoes Captured.

On the night of March 20th last, as the east-bound Atlantic & Pacific passenger train was pulling through Canyon Diablo, west of Winslow, Arizona, it was boarded by four masked men. The train was moving slowly and the robbers mounted the locomotive without difficulty. By threats of shooting they forced the engineer to stop the train. One of the men stood guard over the locomotive while the others took the fireman to the express car and compelled him by threats to call to the Wells Fargo Express messenger to open the door, which the robbers entered. They searched the messenger and obtained from him between \$200 and \$300. A safe containing several thousand dollars was not touched and no demand was made on the messenger to unlock it. None of the passengers were molested, and no resistance was offered. In fact it would have been useless, and the robbers had a decided advantage. After the robbery the four masked men started south. As soon as possible, Sheriff Buck O'Neil, of Yavapai County, Arizona, collected a posse and started in pursuit.

The sheriff learned that the desperadoes had made for Utah, and he followed, being close upon their track. While he was after them a dispatch was received stating that he and three of his men had been killed. This was accepted as true by his friends, as the pursued party were known to be desperate men, but fortunately the rumor proved to be false.

The robbers made the best time they could into Utah. Word had been sent ahead to the sheriffs of Kane and Garfield counties, and about the last of March two of the fugitives made their appearance at Cannonville, Garfield County. It is stated that there were about thirty men attempted to arrest them, but the two robbers kept them at bay and managed to escape. They traveled eastward, and had gone about forty miles when Sheriff O'Neil came upon one of them; "Bill" Stiren. The sheriff's party had "the drop" on him, so he gave up. This was on April 1st. The next day another one, John J. Smith, was taken, and on April 4th the remaining fugitives, Toke Quince and Charles Clark were taken into custody. As the penalty in Arizona for train robbing is death, the robbers were armed and would have shown fight had their been a chance, but this was not given them.

On April 10 the prisoners and sheriff's posse came up on the Utah