

### FIRE.

About 11.40 last Tuesday morning the Footscray and Newport fire brigades received a call to a large grass fire at St. Albans, and were quickly in attendance.

Mr. James Clarke, manager of the Indian Horse Dealing Co., owned by Mr. J. Gidney, of Benalla, saw the fire start near the St. Albans railway station. He endeavoured to prevent it from spreading further, but the wind changed, and the fire swept through five paddocks, missing one which contained sheep. The boundary riders mustered the horses and cattle and drove them into an unburnt paddock.

As the flames approached the Albion Quarrying Company's premises four men were despatched from their works to protect the powder magazine. At one time there was a danger of the fire crossing Ballarat-road to the houses and haystacks on the opposite side, but the firemen concentrated at this point and prevented it from breaking through. Four hours were spent before the firemen and helpers could stay the progress of the fire. No water was obtainable, and the flames could be fought with beaters only. The men deserve credit for their stoic front in fighting for four hours without water and partially choked by the dense smoke. Scores of rabbits, burnt out of their homes, rushed around in wild confusion, and were destroyed.

Mr. Gidney, who is at present staying in Melbourne, recently had haystacks and crops destroyed at Benalla.